State of Arkansas
91st General Assembly
Regular Session, 2017

By: Representative Sturch

For An Act To Be Entitled
AN ACT TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDANCE; AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle
TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT
ATTENDANCE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code §§ 6-18-210 and 6-18-211 are repealed.
As used in this section and § 6-18-211:
(1) “Financial hardships” means harm or suffering caused by a
student’s inability to obtain or provide basic life necessities of food,
clothing, and shelter for the student or the student’s family; and
(2) “Planned instructional time” means regularly scheduled class
periods offering organized teaching of a Department of Education-sanctioned
class curriculum.

6-18-211. Mandatory attendance for students in grades nine through
twelve.
(a) Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, students in grades nine
through twelve (9-12) shall be required to schedule and attend a full school
day.
(b)(1) No later than January 30, 2004, the State Board of Education
shall promulgate regulations that require students in grades nine through
twelve (9-12) to enroll in no less than three hundred fifty (350) minutes of
planned instructional time each day as a requirement for graduation.

(2)(A) The regulations shall allow local school district boards
of directors to develop policies to allow:

(i) Students to be assigned to no more than one (1)
class period each day for a study hall period that the student shall be
required to attend and participate in for a full class period of self-study
or organized tutoring in the school building; and

(ii)(a) No more than one (1) class period each day
for organized and scheduled student extracurricular classes to be included as
planned instructional time.

(b) If the extracurricular class is related to
a seasonal activity, the class must continue to meet after the season ends to
be counted toward the requirement of planned instructional time.

(B) The regulations shall allow local school district
boards of directors to develop policies for granting waivers to students who
would experience proven financial hardships if required to attend a full
school day.

(c) Enrollment and attendance in vocational-educational training
courses, college courses, school work programs, and other Department of
Education-sanctioned educational programs may be used to satisfy the
requirements of this section even if the programs are not located at the
public schools.

(d) Nothing in this section and § 6-18-210:

(1) Precludes a student who has met all graduation requirements
from graduating early; or

(2) Requires a student who has graduated early from high school
to continue to attend school.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-18-213(a)(2), concerning the basic record
of student attendance, is amended to read as follows:

(2) This basic record, showing the daily attendance and absence
of each student for the school year, shall be kept by a teacher or other
officially designated person who visually notes the physical presence
attendance or absence of each student on a daily basis.
SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-47-406(a)(2)(A) and (B), concerning distance learning programs, is amended to read as follows:

(2) The student agrees to physically attend the public school or open-enrollment public charter school for the purposes of taking:

   (A) A distance learning course taught through the public school or open-enrollment public charter school; and

   (B) State tests and assessments required for the particular course or courses taken by the student; and

APPROVED: 04/04/2017