

# Hall of the House of Representatives

95th General Assembly - Regular Session, 2025

## Amendment Form

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### Subtitle of House Bill 1696

TO ESTABLISH THE STRENGTHENING ARKANSAS EDUCATION ACT; AND TO  
PROVIDE A CORE CURRICULUM AT STATE-SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION.

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### Amendment No. 1 to House Bill 1696

Amend House Bill 1696 as originally introduced:

Delete everything after the enacting clause, and substitute the following:

"SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Title – Legislative intent.

(a) This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Strengthening  
Arkansas Education Act".

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly:

(1) That undergraduate students in state-supported institutions  
of higher education acquire knowledge and skills that enable the students to  
contribute to their state and country as informed, self-reliant, and civic-  
minded citizens;

(2) To implement a fully transferrable core curriculum for  
state-supported colleges and universities that ensures a general education  
that provides students in Arkansas with a shared knowledge of the history,  
ideals, and institutions of America, along with a proper introduction to  
logic, reasoning, and communications;

(3) To ensure that general education survey courses provide  
students with a broad understanding of a subject's core ideas, theories, and  
history, fulfilling breadth requirements and fostering a well-rounded  
education;

(4) That the requisite core curriculum in this act serve as a  
basis for a minimum general education core curriculum established by the  
Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board for state-supported institutions



of higher education; and

(5) To promote a coordinated system of higher education in Arkansas and to assure an orderly and effective development of each of the state-supported institutions of higher education.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-41-704(2), concerning the exemption under the Building Better Futures Program from the state minimum core curriculum, is repealed.

~~(2) Be exempt from the higher education state minimum core curriculum as determined by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board under § 6-61-218;~~

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-41-804(2), concerning the exemption under the Building Better Futures High School Program from the state minimum core curriculum, is repealed.

~~(2) Be exempt from the higher education state minimum core curriculum as determined by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board under § 6-61-218;~~

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-61-105 is repealed.

~~6-61-105. Course in American history or civil government required.~~

~~(a) A state supported institution of higher education shall not grant to any student a baccalaureate degree unless he or she has passed a course in American history or civil government, including:~~

~~(1) Instruction in the essentials of the United States Constitution; and~~

~~(2) The study of American institutions and ideals.~~

~~(b) The Division of Higher Education shall see to the strict carrying out of this section and may take such steps and measures as may be necessary to effectuate its provisions.~~

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 61, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-61-144. Arkansas Requisite Core Curriculum – Definitions.

(a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Arkansas Requisite Core Curriculum”.

(b) As used in this section:

(1) "Minimum general education core curriculum means" the minimum general education core curriculum requirements for associate and baccalaureate degree programs at state-supported institutions of higher education;

(2) "Requisite core curriculum" means the fifteen (15) semester credit hours of introductory survey courses as determined by the Division of Higher Education;

(3) "State-supported institution of higher education" means a public postsecondary institution or a department in a public postsecondary institution that:

(A) Provides:

(i) An eligible program of training to prepare a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation; or

(ii) A program leading to an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree; and

(B) Is accredited by a recognized accrediting agency or association and has continuously held the accreditation for the number of years required by the division.

(c)(1) Beginning with the entering class of fall 2027, the division in consultation with the state-supported institutions of higher education shall establish a requisite core curriculum that shall apply toward the minimum general education core curriculum requirements for associate and baccalaureate degrees at the state-supported institutions of higher education.

(2) The requisite core curriculum shall be fully transferable among all state-supported institutions of higher education.

(3) A state-supported institution of higher education shall not grant an associate or baccalaureate degree to a student unless he or she has completed the minimum required core curriculum as determined by the division.

(d) The requisite core curriculum shall include the following fifteen (15) semester credit hours of introductory survey courses:

(1) Two (2) three-semester credit hours of oral or written communication designed to develop the ability to organize ideas and to communicate, with clarity, precision, and syntactical maturity;

(2) A three-semester credit hour course that cultivates critical

thinking, problem-solving, and logical reasoning skills; and

(3) A three-semester credit hour course in American history and a three-semester credit hour course in American government, including:

(A) Instruction in the essentials of the United States Constitution; and

(B) The study of American institutions and ideals.

(e) To ensure compliance with this section, the division may establish reporting requirements for state-supported institutions of higher education detailing implementation of the requisite core curriculum.

(f) In determining whether a course meets the requisite core curriculum requirements, the division may:

(1) Exempt Applied Science degrees;

(2) Grant credit hour equivalency for competency-based and proficiency-based baccalaureate degree programs; and

(3) Allow for substitution of advanced coursework with specified majors, with the exception that American Government and American History are required for every student.

(g) The division may promulgate rules to implement this section.

SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 6-61-218 is repealed.

~~6-61-218. Minimum college core — Transferability.~~

~~To promote a coordinated system of higher education in Arkansas and to assure an orderly and effective development of each of the state-supported institutions of higher education, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall establish in consultation with state-supported institutions of higher education a minimum core of courses which shall apply toward the general education core curriculum requirements for associate and baccalaureate degrees at state-supported institutions of higher education and which shall be fully transferable among all state-supported institutions of higher education.~~

SECTION 7. Arkansas Code § 6-61-231(a)(4)(A), concerning the definition of "state minimum core curriculum" related to statewide transfer agreements, is amended to read as follows:

(4)(A) "State minimum core curriculum" means sixty (60) semester hours of lower-division coursework that include the ~~thirty-five-hour~~ general

education core, major program prerequisites, and elective requirements that satisfy the requirements of an associate of arts degree, an associate of science degree, an associate of arts in teaching degree, and selected baccalaureate degrees at all public institutions of higher education as determined by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board."

The Amendment was read \_\_\_\_\_  
By: Representative McAlindon  
CRH/CRH - 03-18-2025 03:28:01  
CRH285

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Chief Clerk