

Stricken language would be deleted from present law. Underlined language would be added to present law.

1 State of Arkansas
2 81st General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 1997

A Bill

SENATE BILL 703

4
5 By: Senator Jeffries

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 "THE PUBLIC EDUCATION ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND TESTING ACT."

Subtitle

11
12 "THE PUBLIC EDUCATION ACADEMIC STANDARDS
13 AND TESTING ACT."

14
15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

17 SECTION 1. TITLE.

18 This act shall be known and may be cited as "The Public Education
19 Academic Standards and Testing Act of 1997".

21 SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

22 (a) The General Assembly acknowledges the importance of parents in
23 planning for their children's education experience and seeks to empower
24 parents in providing clear information regarding expectations for student
25 achievement and testing that will monitor the progress of that achievement in
26 core academic subject areas.

27 (b) The General Assembly further acknowledges the important role of
28 citizens in local communities in providing clear information regarding
29 achievement of students in core academic subject areas.

30 (c) The General Assembly also acknowledges the importance of educators
31 in providing clear information regarding achievement of students in core
32 academic subject areas.

33 (d) The General Assembly recognizes the importance of an academic
34 blueprint to guide local school districts, in which, academic standards are
35 locally determined, and are clear, concise, and challenging. Toward this end,
36 the local districts are granted flexibility to choose curriculum and offer

1 academic courses that will meet and exceed these standards.

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3 SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

4 As used in this act:

5 (1) "Academic blueprint" means courses of study leading toward
6 graduation and representing completion of credit of instruction in specific
7 academic subject areas. Course credit shall be acknowledged by a locally
8 elected school board for graduation purposes.

9 (2) "Academic standards" means that, for each course aligned in the
10 academic blueprint, a locally elected school board shall design rigorous
11 standards so that students, teachers, and parents have a clear understanding
12 of how to meet those standards.

13 (3) "Academic achievement tests" means a state evaluation procedure
14 that shall use a standardized norm-referenced achievement test based on the
15 content of the academic blueprint that will clearly show the performance of
16 students' ability in academic areas.

17 (4) "Prospectus" means a description of all courses in each of the
18 defined academic blueprint subject areas written by a local school board. All
19 courses offered that are not aligned to the academic blueprint subject areas
20 must be defined with clear language describing the purpose and objectives of
21 the program. Credit will be acknowledged for graduation purposes in the
22 academic blueprint. All other courses shall be considered electives or extra
23 credit.

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25 SECTION 4. ACADEMIC BLUEPRINT.

26 (a)(1) All public school students shall be taught the following
27 academic subject areas and successful student completion of the planned
28 courses shall be given credit by meeting the academic standards that are
29 designed by the local school boards: English, reading, spelling, grammar,
30 writing, mathematics, social studies (to include United States and Arkansas
31 history and geography), health, music, art, foreign languages, and science.

32 (2) Credit shall be given by teachers who perform the duties of
33 teaching the planned courses of the subject areas in the academic blueprint.

34 (3) Exceptions shall be granted to children in special education
35 who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

36 (b) The academic blueprint shall be used as criteria that a local

1 school board will use in a written prospectus that shall be required to
2 identify all planned courses that are offered in each subject area, with an
3 accurate description of each course so that it will be possible for parents to
4 decide which course will contribute to the potential of their child for future
5 educational/vocational decisions and graduation.

6 (c) The prospectus shall be filed with the local school district and
7 shall be made available to every parent of children in the district.

8 (d) Twenty-one (21) units of credit for grades nine (9) through twelve
9 (12) shall be required for graduation and shall be aligned to the academic
10 blueprint with academic standards determined by locally elected school boards.

11 (e) Locally elected school boards shall issue a diploma to each student
12 who satisfactorily completes the prescribed courses for graduation.

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14 SECTION 5. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent nature
15 are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas Code
16 Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

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18 SECTION 6. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to
19 any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect
20 other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without
21 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this
22 act are declared to be severable.

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24 SECTION 7. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are
25 hereby repealed.

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