

1 State of Arkansas
2 89th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2013
4

As Engrossed: H4/10/13

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 2055

5 By: Representative Hutchison
6

For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO CREATE *THE ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR AGRICULTURAL*
9 *AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, ARTS, AND TECHNOLOGY* TO
10 SERVE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH
11 GRADE TWELVE (K-12); AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
12

Subtitle

13
14 *TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR*
15 *AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES,*
16 *ARTS, AND TECHNOLOGY.*
17
18
19

20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
21

22 *SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The General Assembly*
23 *finds that:*

24 *(1) Arkansas has a strong rural population that is greater than*
25 *forty-three percent (43%) of the state's total population according to the*
26 *2010 census;*

27 *(2) Arkansas should value and retain its rural youth and prepare*
28 *them for future agricultural and environmental careers in this state;*

29 *(3) Training and education in agricultural and environmental*
30 *sciences, arts, and technology can prepare Arkansas rural youth not only for*
31 *farming, animal management, and forestry careers, but also for employment*
32 *that leads to a career in information technology, management, cooperatives,*
33 *transportation and logistics, accounting, sales, utilities, waterways, and*
34 *conservation;*

35 *(4) Arkansas already provides energy from natural gas, crude*
36 *oil, nuclear electric power, and renewable energy sources such as hydropower,*



1 geothermal, solar, and wind energy;

2 (5) According to the University of Arkansas Division of
3 Agriculture:

4 (A) Agriculture accounted for sixteen billion dollars
5 (\$16,000,000,000) of value added to the Arkansas economy in 2010;

6 (B) Arkansas ranks first in the nation in the production
7 of rice and baitfish, second in the nation in the production of broilers, and
8 third in the nation in the production of catfish, turkeys, and cotton;

9 (C) Arkansas produces almost one-half (1/2) of all rice
10 grown in the United States;

11 (D) Soybean production in Arkansas has a direct value-
12 added contribution of five hundred twenty million dollars (\$520,000,000);

13 (E) One (1) of every six (6) jobs in Arkansas is related
14 to agriculture;

15 (F) Arkansas is the first state to grow edamame
16 commercially;

17 (G) The forestry sector accounted for 27,081 jobs in
18 Arkansas in 2010; and

19 (H) Arkansas is considered one of the leading paper-
20 producing states;

21 (6) Farmers and ranchers spend more than one hundred twenty
22 million dollars (\$120,000,000) every year on conservation programs that help
23 protect our natural resources;

24 (7) There are nearly fifty thousand (50,000) farms in Arkansas,
25 and ninety-seven percent (97%) of those farms are family-owned;

26 (8) Many agricultural and environmental industries are able to
27 form partnerships and provide support to Arkansas public school students
28 focusing on these careers; and

29 (9) The state should establish a school dedicated to:

30 (A) Developing specialized agricultural and environmental
31 the specialized skills and knowledge in Arkansas's public school students;
32 and

33 (B) Keeping those students in Arkansas as agricultural or
34 environmental entrepreneurs or to fill existing employment needs in and
35 attract businesses from agricultural and environmental industries.

36

1 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 52, is amended to add an
 2 additional subchapter to read as follows:

3
 4 Subchapter 3 - Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental Sciences,
 5 Arts, and Technology

6
 7 6-52-301. Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental Sciences,
 8 Arts, and Technology established - Location.

9 (a)(1) The Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental
 10 Sciences, Arts, and Technology is established for the purposes under § 6-52-
 11 303 to provide one (1) or more public schools that serve students at any
 12 level of Kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) in Arkansas.

13 (2)(A) The school may consist of one (1) or more campuses in the
 14 state, each of which shall be located on the campus of an Arkansas land grant
 15 university, at another Arkansas institution of higher education, or at
 16 another appropriate facility that can provide the land, equipment,
 17 classrooms, laboratories, and other facilities necessary for the proper
 18 operation and support of the school.

19 (B) The school shall be established in a location that:

20 (i) Is in close proximity to land and a water supply
 21 that are suitable for agriculture or conservation; and

22 (ii) Has access to fiber optic communication or
 23 other technology sufficient to support the technological needs of the school.

24 (C) The school may have a residential or nonresidential
 25 campus.

26 (b)(1) The school shall be funded by an appropriation from the General
 27 Assembly for the operation of the school and by grants, contributions, or
 28 donations received by the Department of Education for the support of the
 29 school.

30 (2) Students selected to attend the school shall not be required
 31 to pay tuition, fees, or, if dormitories are provided room and board.

32 (c) The school shall be administered by the department with the advice
 33 and counsel of the advisory board under § 6-52-302.

34 (d)(1) By March 1, 2014, the department shall develop a plan for the
 35 structure, operation, and funding of the school that includes equitable
 36 procedures for student recruitment and retention.

1 (2) The department shall publish a request for proposals to
2 solicit proposals from institutions of higher education or other appropriate
3 organizations or agencies for hosting the school.

4 (3) By July 1, 2015, the department shall select a location for
5 the school to begin operation for the 2015-2016 school year.

6 (e)(1) The department shall prepare the biennial budget request for
7 the school's operation and shall submit the request to the State Board of
8 Education for inclusion in the biennial budget request of the department for
9 funding programs from the Public School Fund.

10 (2) The department may receive contributions, donations, gifts,
11 or other forms of financial assistance, property, land, equipment, materials,
12 or labor from persons, foundations, trust funds, corporations, organizations
13 and other private or public sources to be expended for the operation of the
14 school.

15
16 6-52-302. Advisory board.

17 (a) A seven-member advisory board for the Arkansas School for
18 Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Arts, and Technology is established
19 for the general purpose of providing support and advice concerning the
20 operation of the school.

21 (b)(1) The advisory board consists of:

22 (A) The following members appointed by the Commissioner of
23 Education:

24 (i) One (1) person who holds an administrator's
25 license issued by the State Board of Education and has taught or served as an
26 administrator in a school in an agricultural community;

27 (ii) Three (3) persons, each of whom represents a
28 different sector of the agriculture industry;

29 (iii) One (1) person who holds a teaching license
30 issued by the state board in an agriculture content area; and

31 (iv) One (1) person appointed by the President of
32 the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority; and

33 (B) One (1) member of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet or,
34 if the cabinet does not exist, one (1) member appointed by the Governor.

35 (2) A member of the board shall not be an employee of the
36 school.

1 (3) Appointees shall serve a term of three (3) years, as
2 follows:

3 (A) Two (2) of the initial appointees shall be appointed
4 for a term of one year;

5 (B) Two (2) of the initial appointees shall be appointed
6 for a term of two years; and

7 (C) Three (3) of the initial appointees shall be appointed
8 for a term of three years;

9 (D) Subsequent appointments to the board shall be for
10 three-year terms.

11 (4) A member of the board shall not serve more than nine (9)
12 years.

13 (5) The board annually shall elect a chair and other officers as
14 the board deems appropriate.

15 (c) The duties of the advisory board are to:

16 (1) Recommend implementation and establishment of policies;

17 (2) Serve as a liaison between the school, parents, and other
18 constituents;

19 (3) Provide meaningful advice and recommendations to further the
20 development and operation of the school;

21 (4) Assist in securing financial support for the school;

22 (5) Advise the superintendent of the school and the commissioner
23 regarding the educational, service, and financial needs of the school;

24 (6) Accept and execute specific assignments made by the
25 commissioner or the state board;

26 (7) Keep informed on matters necessary to promote the
27 educational aims of the school for the benefit of the students;

28 (8) Study in detail the reports and issues placed before it by
29 the superintendent, commissioner, or state board; and

30 (9) Promote in diverse ways the growth and development in
31 excellence of the school.

32 (d) The advisory board shall have oversight concerning the school's
33 operating budget, internal governance, and methods of operations.

34
35 6-52-303. Purpose.

36 (a) The purposes of the Arkansas School for Agricultural and

1 Environmental Sciences, Arts, and Technology are to:

2 (1) Attract students who intend to remain in or return to
3 agricultural areas and who possess the aptitude to provide critical services
4 necessary to the success of Arkansas's agricultural communities;

5 (2) Prepare students for occupations or postsecondary education
6 related to:

7 (A) Agriculture;

8 (B) Agriscience;

9 (C) Agribusiness;

10 (D) Agritourism;

11 (E) The care and management of animals;

12 (F) Aquaculture;

13 (G) Forestry;

14 (H) Horticulture; and

15 (I) Other environmental sciences, including without
16 limitation wind, water, tree, plant, and soil science, technology, and
17 conservation;

18 (3) Form partnerships with agricultural and environmental
19 industries and organizations that:

20 (A) Support the school with one (1) or more of the
21 following:

22 (i) Funding;

23 (ii) Land;

24 (iii) Instructional assistance or expertise;

25 (iv) Technology, materials, and equipment; and

26 (v) Internships, mentoring, or other career-related
27 opportunities for the students;

28 (4) Provide flexible opportunities for learning, which may
29 include without limitation:

30 (A) Project-based learning to provide students:

31 (i) The opportunity to apply skills and knowledge to
32 real problems; and

33 (ii) Be exposed to feedback and evaluation from
34 industry professionals;

35 (B) Internships and on-the-job learning opportunities; and

36 (C) Online and hybrid classroom teaching;

1 (5) Develop curriculum and materials to improve instruction in
2 agricultural and environmental sciences, arts, and technology to improve
3 instruction in science and technology to other public schools in the state.

4 (c) To reduce the duplication of services while maximizing student
5 learning and acquisition of skills, the school also may offer:

6 (1) Vocational-technical education in conjunction with other
7 public schools; and

8 (2) Concurrent credit and other programs in conjunction with
9 institutions of higher education.

10
11 6-52-304. Superintendent.

12 (a) The Department of Education shall employ a superintendent for the
13 Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Arts, and
14 Technology who shall serve at the pleasure of the Commissioner of Education.

15 (b) The superintendent shall be the chief administrative officer of
16 the school and administer the school according to the policies established by
17 the department.

18 (c) The superintendent shall employ other personnel as he or she deems
19 necessary for the operation of the school.

20 (d) The superintendent and other personnel employed for the operation
21 of the school:

22 (1) Are employees of the State of Arkansas; and

23 (2) Earn credited service and are eligible for membership in the
24 Arkansas Teacher Retirement System or the Arkansas Public Employees'
25 Retirement System.

26
27 6-52-305. State Board of Education regulations.

28 (a) The State Board of Education may promulgate rules to implement
29 this subchapter.

30 (b) All state board rules shall apply to the Arkansas School for
31 Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Arts, and Technology but the
32 Commissioner of Education may waive or modify a rule to provide the
33 flexibility needed to accomplish the purposes and intent of this subchapter.

34
35 6-52-306. State agency technical assistance.

36 (a) The following state agencies shall provide technical assistance to

1 the staff of the school:

2 (1) Department of Education;

3 (2) Department of Higher Education;

4 (3) Arkansas Agriculture Department;

5 (4) Department of Parks and Tourism;

6 (5) Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality;

7 (6) Arkansas Science and Technology Authority; and

8 (7) Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

9 (b) The Department of Education may contract with other agencies or
10 private research centers to carry out its responsibilities for the operation
11 of the school.

12
13 6-52-307. Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental Sciences,
14 Arts, and Technology Fund.

15 (a) There is created on the books of the Treasurer of State, the
16 Auditor of State, and the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State a fund to be
17 known as the "Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental Sciences,
18 Arts, and Technology Fund".

19 (b) The fund shall be used to provide for the maintenance, operation,
20 and improvement required by the Arkansas School for Agricultural and
21 Environmental Sciences, Arts, and Technology in carrying out its powers,
22 functions, and duties as set out by law.

23 (c) The fund shall consist of moneys allocated and transferred from
24 the Educational Excellence Trust Fund, any general revenues provided by the
25 Revenue Stabilization Law, § 19-5-101 et seq., and any other moneys
26 authorized by law.

27
28 6-52-308. School qualifies as local education agency.

29 (a) The Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental Sciences,
30 Arts, and Technology meets the definition of a "local education agency"
31 because the school is a public authority legally constituted within this
32 state to perform a service function for public, primary, and secondary
33 schools and is a public institution or agency having administrative control
34 and direction of a public school.

35 (b) This section intends to recognize the function of the school and
36 to provide eligibility to the school to receive federal funds.

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6-52-309. Charter school option.

(a) The Commissioner of Education may petition the State Board of Education for the Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Arts, and Technology to receive public charter school status under The Arkansas Charter Schools Act of 1999, § 6-23-101 et seq.

(b) If the petition is granted, funding for the public charter school shall be made through an appropriation by the General Assembly for the Arkansas School for Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Arts, and Technology.

/s/Hutchison