

1 State of Arkansas
2 94th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2023

A Bill

SENATE BILL 369

4
5 By: Senator J. Dotson

For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT CONCERNING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION; TO
9 AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT
10 SYSTEMS USED TO MEASURE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS;
11 TO AMEND THE COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT
12 ACT OF 2021 TO REQUIRE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
13 COURSES, WHICH SHALL INCLUDE COMPUTER SCIENCE
14 COURSES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

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18 CONCERNING CAREER AND TECHNICAL
19 EDUCATION.

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

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24 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative intent.

25 The General Assembly finds and declares that:

26 (1) It is critical to expand the opportunities available to
27 public school students who pursue career and technical education pathways;

28 (2) The State of Arkansas must level the playing field for
29 students who choose a career and technical education pathway by ensuring
30 their accomplishments within a career and technical education pathway are
31 deemed just as significant as those achieved by college-bound students who
32 graduate high school with honors;

33 (3) Ensuring that career and technical education assessments are
34 weighted in a similar manner as traditional education assessments is an
35 important step in providing students with additional options available to
36 them following high school graduation; and



1 (4) It is imperative that career and technical education as a
 2 whole is supported on the state level as an equal alternative to traditional
 3 educational pathways by implementing legislative solutions that address
 4 existing shortfalls faced by students who pursue career and technical
 5 education pathways.

6
 7 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-902(c)(4), concerning career and
 8 technical courses that are eligible for weighted credit, is amended to read
 9 as follows:

10 (4)(A) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education in
 11 collaboration with the Division of Career and Technical Education may approve
 12 a career and technical course within an approved career and technical pathway
 13 for weighted credit if the course:

14 ~~(A)(i)~~ Exceeds the curriculum standards for a nonweighted
 15 class; and

16 ~~(B)(ii)~~ Leads to an approved industry-recognized
 17 certification.

18 (B) The Division of Career and Technical Education shall:

19 (i) Review new and existing career and technical
 20 pathways to determine which courses within the career and technical pathways
 21 meet criteria for weighted credit; and

22 (ii) Publish a list of approved career and technical
 23 pathways annually by January 1.

24 (C) Criteria used to determine what courses within a
 25 career and technical pathway shall receive weighted credit shall include
 26 without limitation the consideration of career and technical pathways that:

27 (i) Lead to high-value industry credentials; and

28 (ii) Align to state and local workforce data.

29 (D) Weighted credit awarded under subdivision (c)(4)(A) of
 30 this section shall be awarded for each course upon:

31 (i) Completing the relevant career and technical
 32 pathway; and

33 (ii) Earning the high-value industry credential
 34 aligned with the career and technical pathway.

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 36 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2907(a), concerning statewide student

1 assessments to measure college and career readiness, is amended to read as
2 follows:

3 (a) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall implement
4 a statewide student assessment system to be administered by Arkansas public
5 schools on a schedule determined by the State Board of Education that
6 includes the following components:

7 (1) Developmentally appropriate measurements or assessments for
8 kindergarten through grade two (K-2) in literacy and mathematics;

9 (2) Assessments to measure English language arts, mathematics,
10 and science as identified by the state board;

11 (3) Assessments of English proficiency of all English learners;
12 and

13 (4)(A) Assessments to measure college and career readiness.

14 (B)(i) A public school that serves a student in grades ten
15 through twelve (10-12) shall administer college and career readiness
16 assessments, including a career readiness assessment that leads to a
17 nationally recognized work readiness certificate, as determined by the state
18 board to each student before he or she graduates from high school.

19 (ii) A career readiness assessment under subdivision
20 (a)(4)(B)(i) of this section may include without limitation the ACT WorkKeys
21 (NCRC).

22 (C)(i) Public school districts may offer additional
23 college and career readiness assessments for students in grades ten through
24 twelve (10-12) at no cost to the student by using public school district
25 funding, including without limitation Enhanced Student Achievement Funding
26 under § 6-20-2305.

27 (ii) A Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze credential
28 through the ACT WorkKeys (NCRC) shall be:

29 (a) Equivalent to the participation and
30 completion in an advanced placement course, a course offered under the
31 International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, and an honor class; and

32 (b)(1) Eligible for weighted credit equal to
33 the numeric grade awarded in advanced placement courses, courses offered
34 under the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, and honors classes.

35 (2) To receive weighted credit under
36 subdivision (a)(4)(C)(ii)(b)(1) of this section, the Platinum, Gold, Silver,

1 or Bronze credential shall be achieved through a college and career readiness
2 course that utilizes the ACT WorkKeys (NCRC) curriculum in preparation for
3 the assessment.

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5 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-16-152(b)(1), concerning requirements
6 under the Computer Science Education Advancement Act of 2021, is amended to
7 read as follows:

8 (b)(1) Beginning with the entering ninth grade class of 2022-2023, a
9 public high school student shall be required to earn one (1) unit of credit
10 in a Department of Education-approved high school ~~computer science~~ career and
11 technical education course before the student graduates.

12 (2) The one (1) unit required in subdivision (b)(1) of this
13 section may be earned in grades eight through twelve (8-12).

14 (3) A ~~computer science~~ career and technical education course
15 offered by a public high school shall:

16 (A) Be of high quality;

17 (B) Meet or exceed the curriculum standards and
18 requirements established by the State Board of Education; and

19 (C) Be made available in a traditional classroom setting,
20 a blended learning environment, an online-based or other technology-based
21 format that is tailored to meet the needs of each participating student.

22 (c)(1) The department shall designate at least four (4) state board-
23 approved ~~computer science~~ career and technical education courses that
24 students in grade eight (8) may take for high school credit, which shall
25 include without limitation at least one (1) computer science course.

26 (2) If a student in grade eight (8) wishes to take a course not
27 designated, a school district must comply with any existing course approval
28 requirements.