

1 State of Arkansas As Engrossed: S3/9/23 S3/14/23 S3/15/23

2 94th General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2023

SENATE BILL 369

4

5 By: Senators J. Dotson, J. Bryant, J. English

6 By: Representative Beck

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For An Act To Be Entitled

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

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Subtitle

19

CONCERNING CAREER AND TECHNICAL
20 EDUCATION.

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

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SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative intent.

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The General Assembly finds and declares that:

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

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

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(3) Ensuring that career and technical education assessments are
35 weighted in a similar manner as traditional education assessments is an
36 important step in providing students with additional options available to



1 them following high school graduation; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36

1 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2907(a), concerning statewide student
2 assessments to measure college and career readiness, is amended to read as
3 follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (ii) A Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze credential
29 through the ACT WorkKeys (NCRC) shall be used by an institution of higher
30 education as transcribable credit toward the attainment of a postsecondary
31 technical degree.

32
33 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-16-152(b)(1), concerning requirements
34 under the Computer Science Education Advancement Act of 2021, is amended to
35 read as follows:

36 (b)(1) Beginning with the entering ninth grade class of 2022-2023, a

1 public high school student shall be required to earn one (1) unit of credit
2 *in a Department of Education-approved high school career and technical*
3 *education course with at least fifty percent (50%) of the content being in*
4 *computer science ~~course~~ before the student graduates.*

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

7 (3) A career and technical education course with at least fifty
8 percent (50%) of the content being in computer science offered by a public
9 high school shall:

10 (A) Be of high quality;

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

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

16 (c)(1) The department shall designate at least four (4) state board-
17 approved career and technical education courses with at least fifty percent
18 (50%) of the content being in computer science ~~courses~~ that students in grade
19 eight (8) may take for high school credit.

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

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24 SECTION 5. DO NOT CODIFY. Applicability.

25 A student who has been approved for weighted credit in a career and
26 technical course under § 6-15-902(c)(4) prior to the effective date of this
27 act shall receive weighted credit for the career and technical course in
28 which the student is currently enrolled in the form in which the weighted
29 credit has been approved.

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31 /s/J. Dotson
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