

SENATE BILL 249

By Norris

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1; Title 49, Chapter 2; Title 49, Chapter 3 and Title 49, Chapter 6, relative to rigorous school coursework.

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

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 2, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) The department of education shall seek a national nonprofit education organization with which to form a partnership to be known as the Tennessee College Credit Partnership (TCCP).

(b) The partner shall provide, under contract with the department:

(1) Staffing in support of the partnership in selected schools and school districts;

(2) Consulting expertise and technical assistance to help improve college readiness of secondary students; and

(3) Assistance in middle and secondary schools in ensuring that all students have access to high quality, rigorous academics, with a focus on access to statewide dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge, International Baccalaureate (IB), dual enrollment courses, and any other courses or programs that provide opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit while enrolled in high school.

(c) The partnership shall:

(1) Make available professional development to enable teachers of postsecondary credit courses to have the necessary content knowledge and

instructional skills to prepare students for success on the course examinations and mastery of postsecondary course content;

(2) Provide administrators, including principals and school counselors, with professional development that will enable them to create strong and effective college credit programs in their schools;

(3) Provide middle and high school teachers with professional development and materials that prepare students for success in college credit courses;

(4) Utilize the results of student diagnostic tests, such as the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), to identify students who are prepared or who need additional work to be prepared to enroll and be successful in college credit courses; and

(5) Prepare an annual report concerning the implementation of the program to be submitted to the education instruction and programs committee of the house of representatives, the education committee of the senate, and the state board of education. The report shall be prepared with the assistance of the department of education and, if contracted for by the state board, a third party vendor or evaluator, and shall include the pertinent details of the partnership, including:

(A) The number of students participating in the program, including a demographic breakdown;

(B) The number and percentage of the participating students taking an exam and the score obtained;

(C) The number of teachers attending college credit professional development;

(D) Recent trends in college credit participation and performance;

(E) The distribution of funds under this program;

(F) Levels of participation in the tenth grade PSAT/NMSQT testing for providing the potential to earn college credit;

(G) Information on whether the participating school or school district provided funding for the associated college credit exams; and

(H) Other pertinent matters suggested by the state board of education or the education instruction and programs committee of the house of representatives and the education committee of the senate.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-1-308, is amended by deleting the section in its entirety.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 3, Part 3, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) Subject to appropriation each fiscal year by the general assembly of funds outside the BEP:

(1) Public high school students enrolled in college credit courses shall not be required to pay any fee to take the examination of such course;

(2) Public high school students enrolled in career and technical courses leading to certification or licensure in the field of study shall not be required to pay any fee to take the certification or licensure examination; and

(3) The cost of the examination shall not be the responsibility of the student, regardless of the score achieved on the examination by the student.

(b) The department of education shall develop procedures by which the funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (a) shall be distributed to the LEAs to pay for examination fees. The procedures shall take into consideration funding for examination fees that may be available from the federal government, grants, or other

sources. The state board of education shall approve the procedures developed by the department prior to their implementation.

SECTION 4. The provisions of this act shall not be construed to be an appropriation of funds, and no funds shall be obligated or expended pursuant to this act unless such funds are specifically appropriated by the general appropriations act.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.