

SENATE BILL 2498

By Akbari

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
relative to technical education.

WHEREAS, the 112<sup>th</sup> General Assembly recognizes that school curriculums and learning spaces struggle to keep pace with the rapidly changing needs of industry; and

WHEREAS, educational programs and offerings must evolve so that Tennessee students are prepared for the workforce; now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 4, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) The state board of education shall develop an Industry 4.0 diploma as an alternative to the traditional diploma for high school students who are interested in pursuing a career in a high-need, high-skill industry after graduation.

(b) A high school student interested in receiving an Industry 4.0 diploma must:

(1) Before the end of the student's sophomore year:

(A) Notify the student's counselor or school principal of the student's intent to pursue an Industry 4.0 diploma;

(B) Provide the student's counselor or school principal with documentation signed by the student's parent or legal guardian indicating that the student's parent or legal guardian is aware of the requirements for the parent's or legal guardian's student to obtain an Industry 4.0 diploma and consenting to the student's participation;

(C) Register with a regional American Job Center or other career counseling or community partner approved by the student's school; and

(D) Enroll in work-based learning or dual enrollment courses for the student's junior year;

(2) Beginning in the student's junior year, meet, no less than once per month, with a career coach who meets the requirements of subsection (c) and who has been approved to provide career coaching services by the student's school;

(3) Before the end of the student's junior year, enroll in work-based learning or dual enrollment courses for the student's senior year; and

(4) Successfully complete all coursework required for graduation.

(c) A career coach must:

(1) Be an American Job Center career coach, a career coach from a career counseling or community partner approved by the U.S. department of labor's regional office for the state of Tennessee, or a certified school counselor or an educator who holds a work-based learning credential; and

(2) Meet, no less than once per month, with students assigned to the career coach by the student's school principal to assist students in:

(A) Developing the personal attributes required for success in the workforce, which include, but are not limited to, time management, networking, communication, teamwork, creative thinking, and conflict resolution;

(B) Applying for dual enrollment grants or other available financial aid opportunities, including, but not limited to, grants and scholarships administered by the Tennessee student assistance corporation;

(C) Identifying the best combination of dual enrollment, work-based learning, and internship opportunities available to the student; and

(D) Preparing for standardized assessments such as the ACT®.

(d) Transportation to and from a college of applied technology, work-based learning location, or career and technical education center may be provided by the student's LEA or public charter school using local school funds in the same manner as provided for students attending other public schools.

(e) Each public high school, including public charter high schools, shall notify freshman and sophomore students enrolled in the public high school or public charter high school of the opportunity to pursue an Industry 4.0 diploma pursuant to this section. The notice required under this subsection (e) must be provided to students biannually no later than ten (10) days after the first day of each semester of the school year.

(f) The state board of education shall develop and adopt high school course graduation requirements for students pursuing an Industry 4.0 diploma that allow students to graduate from high school upon successfully completing:

(1) Four (4) credits of English;

(2) Three (3) credits of mathematics, which must be completed before the student's senior year of high school;

(3) Three (3) credits of science, one (1) credit of which may be satisfied by the student's successful completion of a dual enrollment course or work-based learning course;

(4) Two (2) credits of social studies;

(5) One-half (0.5) credit of personal finance;

(6) One-half (0.5) credit of physical education; and

(7) Nine (9) credits of dual enrollment or work-based learning, which may be satisfied by the student's successful completion of dual enrollment coursework, work-based learning experiences, on-the-job training, or other mentorships or structured educational experiences that allow the student to apply the student's knowledge and skills in a work environment to develop an understanding of workplace expectations.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 11, Part 9, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

In a work-based learning program, a maximum of three (3) credits may be earned in one (1) school year. At least one (1) credit must be earned through related classroom experience, which must include a minimum of two (2) periods per week of classroom instruction. A minimum of ten (10) hours per week of supervised work experience is required for one (1) additional credit, and a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week is required for two (2) additional credits. Students earning credits for work experience must be supervised by a certified work-based learning coordinator. Work-based learning programs must adhere to all state and federal child labor laws.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 5, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

Notwithstanding § 49-1-302, § 49-5-108, or this chapter to the contrary:

- (1) To obtain a practitioner occupational teacher license, a person must:
  - (A) Hold, at a minimum, a high school diploma;
  - (B) Have a minimum of three (3) years of relevant work experience completed within the five-year period immediately preceding the date on which the person submits an application for a practitioner

occupational teacher license in the area of endorsement or equivalent educational attainment, as defined by the department of education; and

(C) Hold an active industry certification from the area of endorsement, as defined by the department, if applicable;

(2) A person shall not be required to:

(A) Take an assessment to obtain, advance, or renew a practitioner or professional occupational teacher license; or

(B) Be enrolled, or complete a set number of hours or credits in, a state-board-approved educator preparation program to obtain, advance, or renew a practitioner or professional occupational teacher license; and

(3) The state board of education shall not establish, through policy or rule, requirements for a person to obtain a practitioner occupational teacher license other than the requirements established in subdivision (1).

SECTION 4. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it, and applies to the 2022-2023 school year and each school year thereafter.