

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 602

By Gresham

A RESOLUTION to encourage Tennessee to adopt a statewide, honorary Work Ethic Diploma.

WHEREAS, the Work Ethic Diploma program originated as part of the Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP), a Tennessee initiative developed to ensure that the State is graduating skilled workers ready to take on the jobs offered by employers and industry; and

WHEREAS, a work ethic diploma is a workforce readiness credential that can be earned by high school seniors in participating counties; students who earn the Tennessee Work Ethic Diploma are given preference for job interviews at partnering employers if they meet all other qualifications of the job posting; and

WHEREAS, LEAP sought to create community-led partnerships that would align educational training and postsecondary credentials to meet the needs of regional industry employers; these partnerships included industry partners, postsecondary institutions, K-12 educators, and workforce development professionals; and

WHEREAS, participating students receive a list of Work Ethic Diploma Standards that includes fourteen achievement categories, with each category having one, two, or three subcategories that are assigned a point value; and

WHEREAS, students who sign up for the Work Ethic Diploma must complete enough of the goals set out in the achievement categories to score twenty points in order to receive the diploma; and

WHEREAS, the Work Ethic Diploma program was first adopted and implemented in school systems in Grainger, Hamblen, and Hawkins counties with high schools there awarding the first Work Ethic Diplomas at the end of the 2015-16 school year; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the program expanded to include school districts in Cocke, Greene, and Sevier counties so that at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, seventeen different school systems in Northeast Tennessee will award Work Ethic Diploma credentials to their graduating students; and

WHEREAS, enjoying success with local industry, forty employers currently recognize the Work Ethic Diploma with new industry partners added regularly; the Work Ethic Diploma will help build a brighter economic future for all of Northeast Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, such resounding success should and must be replicated statewide to offer our students the best chance for a bright future, ensure a quality workforce for area employers, and continue the economic progress of the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we encourage the Tennessee Department of Education to adopt a statewide, honorary Work Ethic Diploma for implementation beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, when designing the criteria for the diploma, the Department of Education may consider success in the following: Attendance Standard; Absence Standard; Tardiness Standard; Discipline Standard; Overall Grade Point Average Standard; Drug Free Standard; CTE Coursework Standard; CTE Competition Standard; TN Promise Standard; Dual Enrollment/Credit Standard; Industry Certification Standard; Enrollment in Post-Secondary Standard; Career Readiness Certificate Standard; and Industry Awareness Standard.