

**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION RULES
GOVERNING GRADING AND COURSE CREDIT
(Chapters 1 and 7 Only)**

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Commenter Name: Lucas Harder, Arkansas School Boards Association (11/16/2021)

Comment (1): In Section 1-2.08, there appears to be an unnecessary “or course” to match the language from 6-16-152(b)(1). Division of Elementary and Secondary Education” could be shortened to just “Division” here.

Division Response: Comments considered. **Non-substantive changes made.**

Comment (2): In [now] Section 1-2.23, “DESE” here should probably be “the Division” as there has been no previous abbreviation to DESE.

Division Response: Comment considered. **Non-substantive change made.**

Comment (3): In Section 7-2.02, I would recommend adding a parenthetical “one” here.

Division Response: Comment considered. **Non-substantive change made.**

Commenter Name: Bonnie Curlin, North Little Rock School District (11/16/2021)

Comment: Perhaps 1-2.18 needs to specify that the pre-AP course also has a syllabus and must be approved by College Board now. Districts may no longer call a course pre-AP unless they go through the College Board process.

Division Response: Comment considered. **Non-substantive changes made.**

Commenter Name: Michelle Cruz Arnold, Vice President of Government Relations, College Board (11/16/2021)

Comment: The College Board, as a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success, welcomes the opportunity to share comments on the proposed rule [Grading Scales and Course Credit – Chapters 1 and 7 only](#). We are privileged to have partnered with the State of Arkansas as an integral component of its strategy for more students to participate in computer science education and look forward to continuing our long-standing relationship. **College Board supports the proposed changes to Chapters 1 and 7 and**

congratulates Arkansas for its ongoing efforts to increase access to rigorous computer science education.

Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles and Arkansas

An education in computer science and coding—the tools with which the future is being built—has been out of reach for too long for too many students across the country. That is why College Board applauds Arkansas for its continued and comprehensive efforts to support computer science education – from the course offering requirement to preparing educators to provide instruction in the subject.

College Board, like Arkansas, believes that providing a more diverse group of students with access to computer science courses is imperative to increasing access to the computer science field's high-paying, fast-paced jobs and to drive innovation, creativity, and competitiveness. We are committed to ensuring all students have access to challenging computer science coursework that prepares students for college and career. Our most recognizable contribution to expanding computer science access is through our newest AP course—AP Computer Science Principles (AP CSP). The AP CSP course changes the invitation to computer science education by engaging traditionally underrepresented students.

College Board has also endorsed curriculum and professional development delivered by a limited number of organizations to ensure that schools and teachers have high-quality options for implementing AP Computer Science Principles. We believe the steps we've taken with AP CSP will continue to complement Arkansas' efforts for computer science education expansion. While we are pleased with the success we've seen with AP CSP across the nation, there is still significant room for growth in Arkansas. Based on College Board 2020-2021 school year data, about 21% of schools offer AP CSP in the state. We also see significant gaps in exam participation among the different student populations in the state.

The latest research findings for AP CSP underscore the importance of the state's efforts to expand computer science access to this course.

- The College Board finds students who took AP CSP in high school were more than 3 times as likely to major in computer science in college, compared to similar students who did not take AP CSP.
 - These results held true for female, Black, Hispanic, and first-generation college students.
 - In fact, Black students who took AP CSP then majored in computer science at higher rate (nearly 20%) than students from any other racial/ethnic group.
- AP CSP students are nearly twice as likely to enroll in AP Computer Science A (CSA)—a more programming-focused course—than students who did not take AP CSP, thus notably reducing AP CSA race/ethnicity enrollment gaps.
- Black students who take AP CSP are three times more likely to take AP CSA, virtually the same share as Asian CSP students, who have long led AP CSA participation.

- AP CSP may serve as a stepping-stone to other advanced STEM coursework. For the class of 2019, more than half of the students who took AP CSP were taking their first AP STEM course. The number of Black, Hispanic, and first-generation students was even higher.

College Board looks forward to seeing the progress Arkansas will make in expanding computer science access over the coming years, especially for the students who have been traditionally underserved in the subject.

Division Response: Comment considered. **No changes made.**