



Graduate Arkansas Amendment Request

August 17, 2021



Who We Are

Dropping Out Is Not An Option

Graduate Arkansas Inc. provides a free high school education option for students that were not successful in the traditional environment. Many students are over-aged and under-credit, while others have totally dropped out.

Graduate Arkansas, formerly SIATech Little Rock, began its journey as an open enrollment public charter school located on the Job Corp campus in 2011. In 2019, the school's name changed to Graduate Arkansas. Graduate Arkansas has received full accreditation for all years of operation.

Graduate Arkansas's model is designed to support each student's real-life situation and assist them in persevering to become productive citizens and obtain adequate employment.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the school served a total of 120 students and celebrated 50 graduates.



Our Staff

Highly Qualified. Committed. Dedicated.

Ms. Katie Hatley was the founding principal when SIA Tech opened in 2011 and served in that role until being promoted to Director. In July 2019, Ms. Hatley became the Superintendent of Graduate Arkansas and continues to serve in that capacity. Ms. Hatley holds an Ed. S in District Level Leadership with 17 of her 30 years of experience in administration. Ms. Hatley has had the opportunity to teach in Hawaii and Alabama as well.

Ms. Hatley leads a staff of dedicated professionals with diverse backgrounds and experience. The instructional staff has a combined total of 26 years teaching experience, and 2 of the 4 instructors hold masters degrees, while the Special Education Director holds an Ed. S.

Graduate Arkansas's staff are committed to making each day count for every student, and to helping students achieve their goals, obtain their high school diploma, and realize their dreams!



Our Students

“At Promise”

Graduate Arkansas’s Staff refer to their students as “At Promise” not At-Risk because “At-Risk” students are surrounded by “At-Risk” adults. Students at Graduate Arkansas are surrounded with role models who believe students can begin a fresh start. Staff members work to break down the barriers that have hindered student success by helping students visualize and believe in their own positive, productive future.

The unique needs of our students are driven by their unique circumstances, including:

- Economically disadvantaged
- Youth who opted out of traditional high school
- Over aged and under credit (i.e., 17 years old with only 6 credits)
- Young parents
- Those working to support family and need flexible schedule
- Those working to re-enter society after being incarcerated



Our Education Model

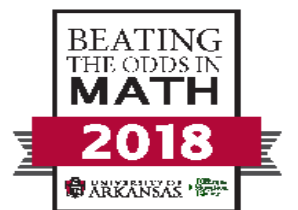
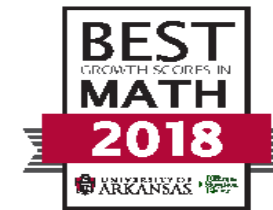
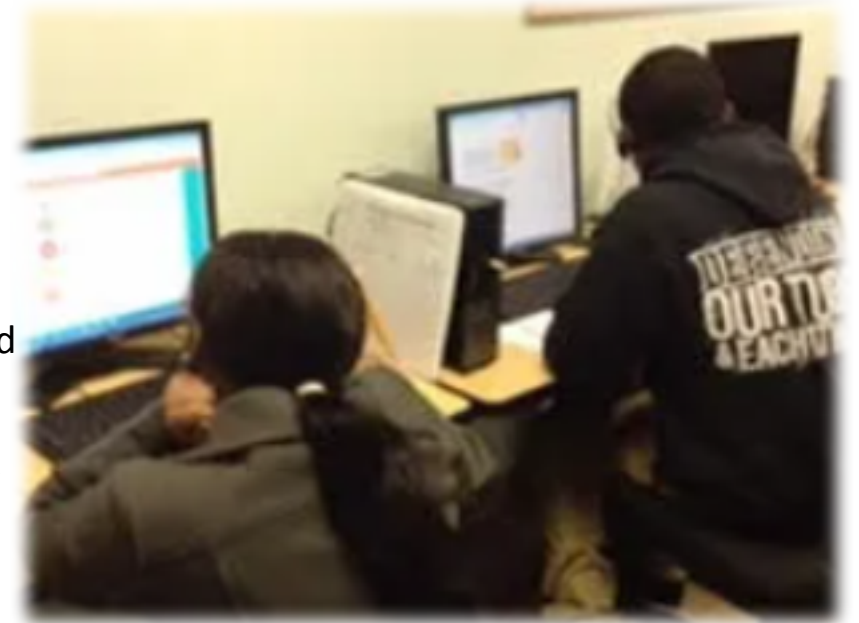
Flexible Online Courses and Curriculum that Meets Students' Needs

Graduate Arkansas supports its students using the Edgenuity Learning Solutions. Edgenuity is a leading provider of K–12 online curriculum and blended learning solutions that specializes in online courses, instructional services, and more.

Courseware curriculum is grounded in research and aligned to state standards, the national standards, and the NGSS. Courses combine direct-instruction videos featuring expert, remote teachers with rigorous assignments, performance tasks, and assessments to engage students and ensure subject-area mastery.

Courseware connects students with a flexible offering that supports evolving instructional needs for fully online, blended, hybrid, and in-person instruction. The student experience provides highly rigorous and rewarding content that features standards-based instruction, powerful interactive tools, and engaging multimedia and real-world applications that help students focus on building content knowledge and essential skills.

Our educational model enables Graduate Arkansas' staff to provide its students with the flexibility needed to meet the students' unique needs. This flexibility allows students to work at their own individualized pace and to participate in direct learning, one-on-one, or via Zoom. Students who need additional help with a content area have access to virtual teachers via Edgenuity or one-on one in-person on Graduate Arkansas's campus, or via Zoom.



Our Services

Credit Recovery

Students can earn credits that they did not complete or failed while enrolled in their previous school.

ACT Test Prep

Students who must take the ACT as their required assessment and students who are interested in going to college will be enrolled in the test prep course.

Life Skills

Students will have the opportunity to listen to guest speakers and engage with stakeholders that will lead to meaningful interactions and experiences.

College & Career Readiness

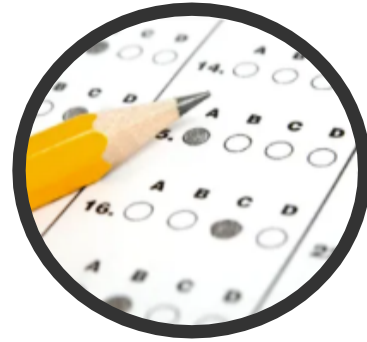
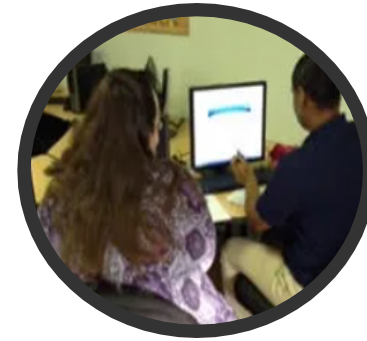
Students can enroll in classes that will help prepare them for their college experience or career.

Military Preparedness

Students who express an interest in the military will have the opportunity to be enrolled in test prep geared specifically to the ASVAB.

Rehabilitation and Therapeutic

Students who qualify have access to vocational rehabilitation services that provides tutoring, life, and employability workshops.

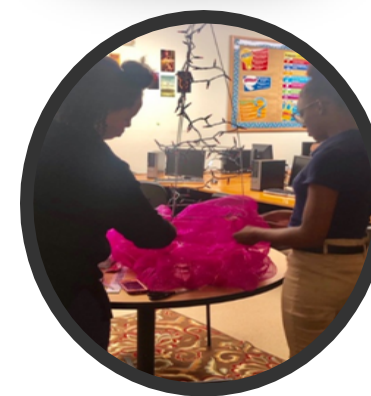
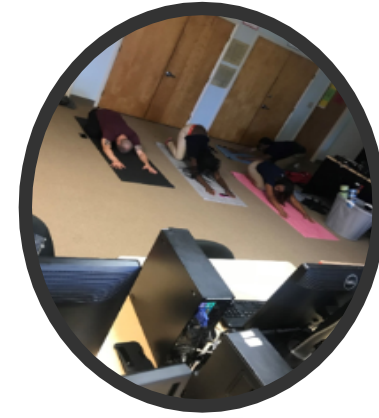


Other Student Services

Beyond the Classroom

Most, if not all, of our students face unusual and unique challenges, which necessitates Graduate Arkansas providing its students with above and beyond social and emotional student services. Graduate Arkansas is also intentional about ensuring its students are introduced to concepts, ideas, and activities that are generally not discussed or available in the communities in which the students reside. Some services and activities that Graduate Arkansas has sponsored over the years include, but are not limited to:

- Am Better (Health Insurance)
- Arkansas Department of Health -HIV and AIDS Education
- Stamp Out Smoking
- Holiday Presentation (Santa Larry)
- Voter Registration
- Job Recruitment Services
- Yoga Therapy
- Arkansas Employment Career Center



Child Nutrition Program

All Students Eat at No Charge

Graduate Arkansas School District participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, and is held to a high standard of accountability, good nutrition and safety. Eating breakfast and lunch will enable students to be better prepared to learn in the classroom. To accommodate our students' need for flexible schedules, breakfast and lunch are offered from approximately 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. and lunch 12:00 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. Snack is served from 2:35 until students leave. Virtual students can also access meals through the Grab-n-Go process.

Graduate Arkansas will continue to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) during the 2021 – 2022 school year, providing meals, regardless of eligibility category, at NO CHARGE for all students. CEP is made possible through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Community Eligibility Provision.

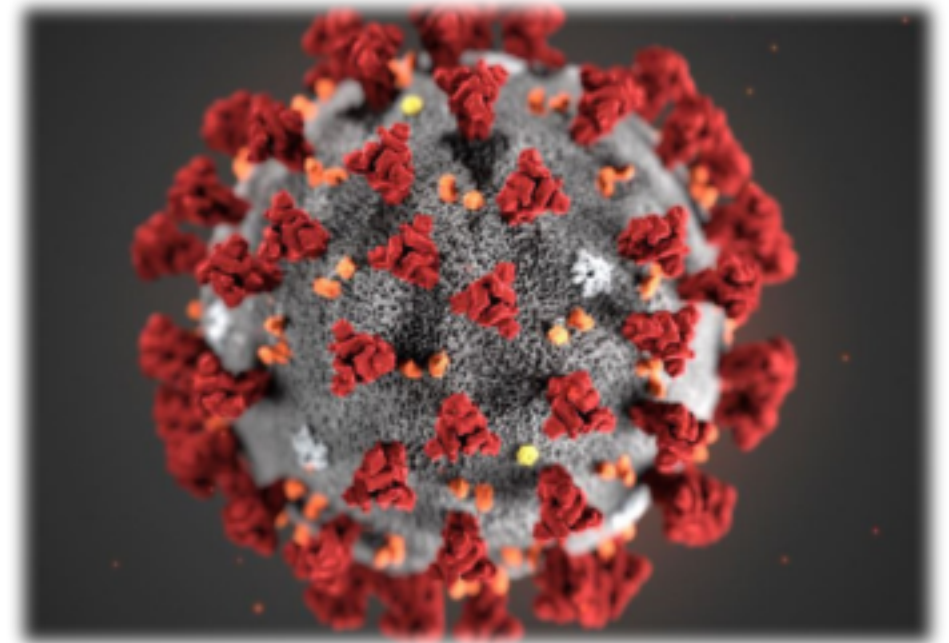


Covid Digital Learning Services

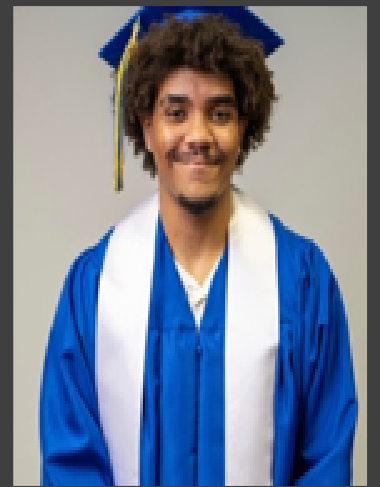
The “New” Normal

Graduate Arkansas recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a gap in education, resulting in a significant number of “lost” students who now fall into the cohorts that Graduate Arkansas seeks to serve. In recognition of the probable adverse generational impacts on students, families, the workforce, state and local tax base, and the juvenile and adult justice system, Graduate Arkansas is undertaking concentrated efforts to reach and “recover” these students.

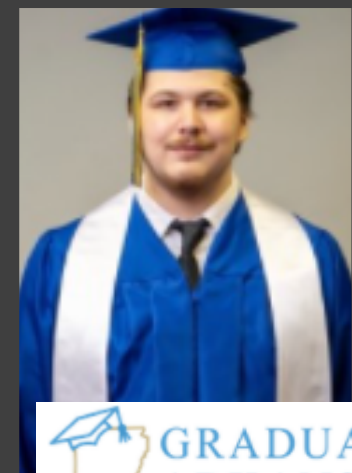
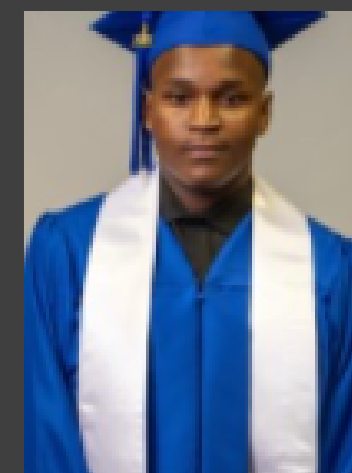
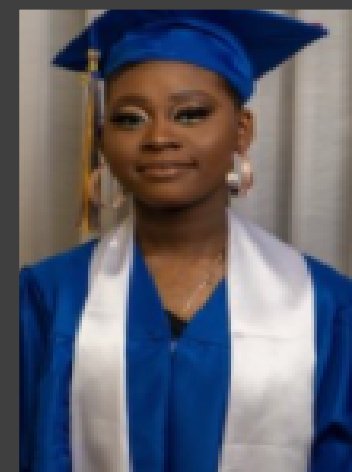
Given the reported numbers of students that disconnected during the pandemic coupled with the ongoing and lingering nature of the pandemic, Graduate Arkansas anticipates an enrollment spike within the next two to five years.



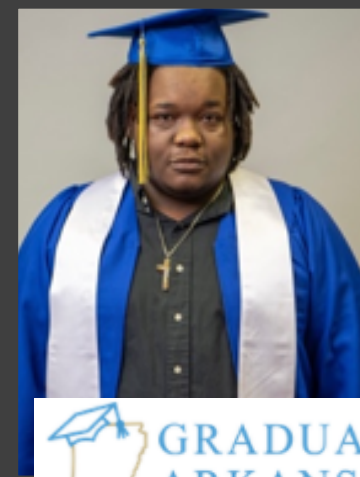
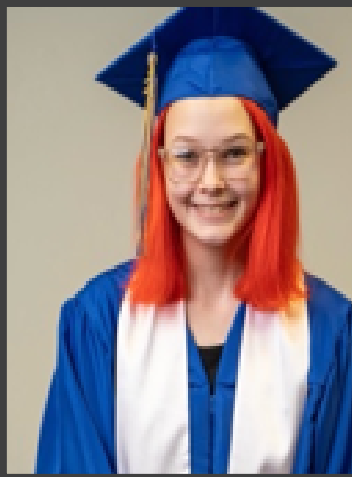
Celebrating Our Graduates



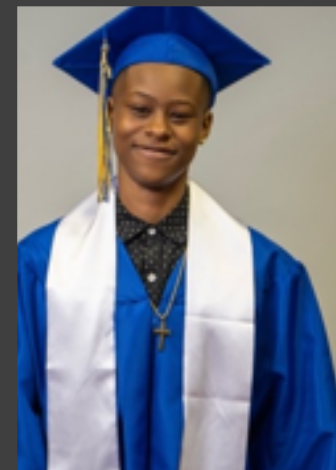
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Our Future Aspirations

Looking to the Future

While we look back on our past achievements with pride, we understand that there is much to be accomplished in the future. Graduate Arkansas's leadership and staff are continuously working to increase our ability to better understand and help the students we serve, as well as to expand the services we provide.

Graduate Arkansas is taking steps to improve our physical and digital environment through technology and facility upgrades. Graduate Arkansas is seeking to expand its service area and add two additional programs - Job Corps Services and Preemptive Juvenile and Young Adult Justice System Services.



Job Corps Program

When Graduate Arkansas opened its doors, it did so on a Job Corps campus located at 9600 Scott Hamilton Drive. At the time, Graduate Arkansas described its relationship with the federal Job Corps program as “a symbiotic relationship to maximize AR public education efforts, provide school dropouts the opportunity to complete their secondary education in a technology-rich, classroom-based environment and an elective program that provides career-technical certification for a 21st Century workforce.”

Approval of Graduate Arkansas’s request to renew its relationship with Job Corps will allow Graduate Arkansas to reestablish and reinforce a pathway for the academic success of students whose unique circumstances and aspirations require a residential program. To achieve this goal, Graduate Arkansas is requesting to add an on-site, in person instructional program on Job Corps campus. Graduate Arkansas expects that it will serve approximately 300 additional students through this partnership. Dual enrolled Job Corp students are enrolled through Graduate Arkansas's regular enrollment process and are subject the same enrollment criteria, including age limitations, as other Graduate Arkansas students.



Preemptive Juvenile Justice System Services

Board approval of Graduate Arkansas's request to join the efforts of the Juvenile Divisions around the state will aid juveniles to continue their education and eventually graduate, despite their history in the court systems.

The Preemptive Juvenile Justice System Services and Graduate Arkansas are requesting approval to provide the best opportunities possible for Arkansas's youth. Specifically, consistent with its culture and core values, Graduate Arkansas's focus is to transform this "at-risk" juveniles to "at promise" students.

With Board approval, Graduate Arkansas expects that it will serve approximately 925 additional students through this partnership. Along with an online educational curriculum, these students will have access to all Graduate Arkansas's student services.



Our Facilities



1.3 Miles



Graduate Arkansas's campus is located at 6724 Interstate 30, Little Rock, AR. If its request is approved, Graduate Arkansas will expand operations to the Job Corps campus, which is located at 6900 Scott Hamilton Drive, Little Rock, AR. Graduate Arkansas will also expand its online presence. The proximity of Graduate Arkansas and the Job Corps campuses will allow Graduate Arkansas to serve both traditional students and dual Graduate Arkansas and Job Corp students on campuses that are in the same community. Under the proposed agreement, Graduate Arkansas will be afforded the opportunity to operate on the Job Corps site at no additional facility cost to Graduate Arkansas. The proposed expansion of its online presence will also allow Graduate Arkansas to provide Preemptive Juvenile Justice System Services to students throughout the state.

Our Finances

Positive Outlook

Graduate Arkansas's financial outlook remains positive. Our fund balance as of June 2021 is \$500,000.

Moreover, Graduate Arkansas has not had a single audit finding during its annual financial audit in its ten-year history.



Operational Enhancements

Pursuing Operational Excellence

Graduate Arkansas understands that sustained excellence is achieved through self-assessment and continuous improvement. Graduate Arkansas recognizes that there are several areas to which it will need to be attuned if it is to successfully absorb the requested enrollment increase. Graduate Arkansas has taken or will take the following actions to further prepare its operations to successfully integrate students:

- E-School Administration
 - Enhanced training for new full-time registrar (August 23rd start date)
 - Cross-train multiple administrative staff members in student accounting process
- Counseling Services
 - Recruiting a full-time student success coach/social worker (counselor) in anticipation of increased student needs (posted position)



Our Request

“The Work Continues”

The central focus of Graduate Arkansas is to continue to serve the under privileged youth ages 15-21 who need to obtain a high school diploma. Specifically, Graduate Arkansas is requesting to:

1. Add a second 9-12 grade campus at 6900 Scott Hamilton Drive
2. Increase its enrollment cap from 275 to 1,500

Category	Individual Total	Cumulative Total
Existing Student Base	275	275
Jobs Corps	300	575
Preemptive Juvenile Justice	925	1500



A Student's Video Testimonial

Why Graduate Arkansas

