

**DIVISION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION RULE GOVERNING THE
ADULT DIPLOMA PROGRAM**

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Commenter Name: Kristian Starner, Graduation Alliance, VP of Public Policy and Government Affairs, 3/14/2024

Comments: Please consider the following statements as public comment for the document for the Division of Career and Technical Education Rules governing the Arkansas Adult Diploma Program (hereafter shortened to the Arkansas Adult Diploma Rules). The following edits are intended to bring the proposed rules into alignment with the statutory intent of Act 546. Proposed Section 2.03: “Adult dropout recovery services” means any type of assistance provided to a diploma-seeking individual in Arkansas including without limitation:

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

Commenter Name: Kristian Starner, Graduation Alliance, VP of Public Policy and Government Affairs, 3/14/2024

Comments: Proposed Section 3.03.2: “Approved program providers who have operated adult education programs for two years or more shall submit a roster for the previous two years of enrolled students, as defined by Section 2.20.” Proposed Section 4.03: “Once a program provider enrolls a student into its program, it shall provide the Department of Education an anticipated average cost of completion of the program for that graduate.” Proposed Section 4.03.1: “The program provider shall provide the department with an updated anticipated average cost of completing the program after each year the student completes.”

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

Commenter Name: Kristian Starner, Graduation Alliance, VP of Public Policy and Government Affairs, 3/14/2024

Comments: Proposed edit to Arkansas Adult Diploma Rules Appendix A: Add “Earned half credit units of high school credit” to the list of milestones for which providers may receive compensation at the rate of \$250 for each earned half credit unit of high school credit. However, “Earned units of high school credit” are not included in Appendix A. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 44, “Arkansas Adult Diploma Act” Section 18A stipulates that a provider will be paid for “Earned units of high school credit.”

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

Commenter Name: Kristian Starner, Graduation Alliance, VP of Public Policy and Government Affairs, 3/14/2024

Comments: The legislative intent of Act 5461 was to create a policy framework for the Arkansas Adult Diploma Program based on ten years of best practices in over seven states that provide a similar model. The best practices for these policies are structured to compensate providers \$250 for each earned half credit unit of high school credit. In the past two years, Arizona and Missouri implemented programs similar to the Arkansas Adult Diploma Program. Arizona's defined billable milestones, which include earned half credit units of high school credit, can be found in Arizona Revised Statute Section 15-217.02,2 Section E6 and Missouri billable milestones are outlined in Exhibit A, Payment Schedule in the Missouri Workforce Diploma Program RFP S30034902301084 bid solicitation.

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

Commenter Name: Kristian Starner, Graduation Alliance, VP of Public Policy and Government Affairs, 3/14/2024

Comments: Proposed edit to Arkansas Adult Diploma Rules Appendix A: Change the proposed payment for a student who attains a high school diploma to \$1,000 to reflect best practices. The payment proposed in the Arkansas Adult Diploma Rules Appendix A for a student who attains a high school diploma is \$500. Best practices in other states with similar adult education programs, such as Arizona and Missouri, stipulate payment amount for completion of the milestone of graduation is \$1,000. Arizona's defined billable milestones, which include graduation, can be found in Arizona Revised Statute Section 15-217.02, Section E6. Missouri billable milestones, including graduation, are outlined in Exhibit A, Payment Schedule in the Missouri Workforce Diploma Program RFP S30034902301084 bid solicitation.

Division Response: **Comment considered. Substantive changes were made which are reflected in the final rule.**

Commenter Name: Kristian Starner, Graduation Alliance, VP of Public Policy and Government Affairs, 3/14/2024

Comments: Proposed edits to Arkansas Adult Diploma Rules Appendix A: Change "Industry-Recognized Credentials" to "Workforce Credentials," which reflects best practices; Add workforce credentials that require fewer than 50 hours of training at a rate of \$250; Change the rate for workforce credentials that require between 51-100 hours of training to \$500; Change the rate for workforce credentials that require more than 100 hours of training to \$750;

Remove "a student who graduates and is placed in a job within an in-demand career pathway" and associated dollars.

Division Response: Comment considered. A nonsubstantive change was made.

Commenter Name: Kristian Starner, Graduation Alliance, VP of Public Policy and Government Affairs, 3/14/2024

Comments: Best practices in these other states stipulate compensation for a workforce credential that requires fewer than 50 hours of training is \$250, a workforce credential that requires between 51-100 hours of training is \$500, and a workforce credential that requires more than 100 hours of training is \$750.

The language in the Arkansas Adult Diploma Rules should align with statute to use the term “workforce credentials” instead of “Industry-Recognized Credentials,” because third-party credentials requiring fewer than 50 hours of training “are part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time” are an important component of adult education.

Division Response: Comment considered. A nonsubstantive change was made.

Commenter Name: Dennis Felton, ResponsivEd – Premier High Schools of Arkansas, Director of Virtual Learning, 3/20/2024

Comments: The first comment I want to address was in 2.18 looking at the milestones that's identified, for which payment is determined. Just want to have the department consider, I know, early on in the transcript evaluation and learning plan development there was consideration of funding from making that milestone and so just want to reiterate the importance of being able to onboard an adult as well as the transcript evaluation and the work is done with their learning plan development should be consideration and payment for that.

Also, in 2.18 it identifies a workforce credential. And it uses language the equivalent to a high school credit and just want the department to take into consideration workforce credentials such as safeserve things like Fort Lift operator certification, computer based applications, 1st aid, CPR, OSHA T, OSHA 30, Lifeguard, certified nursing system, phlebotomist programs that things should be considered also as well in the work for credential, even though they may not be equivalent to a high school diploma as far as hours go.

Division Response: Comment considered. No changes made. This change would be beyond the scope of rulemaking.

Commenter Name: Dennis Felton, ResponsivEd – Premier High Schools of Arkansas, Director of Virtual Learning, 3/20/2024

Comments: The other comment was referencing to 2.11, which kind of defined as a graduate, it says a graduate means a student that has successfully completed all the approved program provider requirements in order to obtain a high school diploma. And I just had notes there that I

know the state, in looking at the high school diploma graduation requirements the state over the past few years has added a few components such as the student must complete a digital learning, course for credit. A students also must take personal and family finance. A students must pass the Arkansas Civics exam, A student must complete CPR training. And the computer science requirement and then also just recently added a community service learning requirement. And so just want to state to take some consideration, to us providers that are seeking to meet the 22 credit threshold as far as meet the graduation requirements and limiting the adults receiving high school diplomas to just the 22 credit threshold.

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

Commenter Name: Dennis Felton, ResponsivEd – Premier High Schools of Arkansas, Director of Virtual Learning, 3/20/2024

Comments: The other comment I had, you know, is still regarding 2.18. Where it indicates the milestone to be met. I mean, it's referencing appendix A.

If you look at appendix A, it outlines the payment schedule, I mean the payment amount for each milestone. And just looking at, for each credit earned, it says a student, I mean, it says, that it completes. I mean a student who completes a unit of high school credit will receive \$250. And so, in looking at that, I hope the state is taking some consideration to maybe increasing that amount. I know, previously in the RFQ, the amount, the average cost shouldn't exceed 7,000. And so, looking at that. Even, look like compared to K-12 funding for high school student too, will hang out around \$335 per credit hour and so hope to stay take some consideration that maybe increases that amount of \$250 per credit hour to support the sustainability of the program.

Overall, I just hope the state, does consider, the milestones and probably we can add milestones to this list or increasing so amounts in particular, looking at that same document Appendix A where it says a student who obtains an industry recognized credentials requiring 50 to a hundred hours of training. Then the provider will receive a hundred \$225. In our research the programs that will require 50 to a hundred hours exceed \$225. They're totally range between \$1,500 to \$2,000 on the lower. And so taking some consideration to make sure that the program and the quality, the quality of the program is sufficiently sustainable.

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

Commenter Name: Dennis Felton, ResponsivEd – Premier High Schools of Arkansas, Director of Virtual Learning, 3/26/2024

Comments: The state should consider waiving the following graduation requirements for Adults over the age of 21: Students must complete a digital course for credit - A.C.A. § 6-16-1406; Students must earn a credit in a course that includes Personal and Family Finance in grades 9-12 - A.C.A. § 6-16-135; Students must pass the Arkansas Civics Exam - A.C.A. § 6-16-149; Students must complete CPR training - A.C.A. § 6-16-143 Beginning with the entering ninth

grade class of 2022-2023, a public high school student shall be required to earn one (1) unit of credit in an ADE-approved high school computer science course before the student graduates. - A.C.A. § 6-16-152

Division Response: Comment considered. No changes made.

Commenter Name: Dennis Felton, ResponsivEd – Premier High Schools of Arkansas, Director of Virtual Learning, 3/26/2024

Comments: Definition: According to the Draft Rules, "Graduate" means a student who has successfully completed all of the approved program provider requirements in order to obtain a high school diploma. Does this mean that the provider develops their own graduation requirements?

Reimbursable Costs: The state should consider reasonable and essential costs associated with educating adult learners. These costs include, but are not limited to technology, backpack, pens, paper, notebook etc. Does IDEA or 504 Applicable for Adults over the age of 21?

Division Response: Comment considered. No changes made.

Commenter Name: Dennis Felton, ResponsivEd – Premier High Schools of Arkansas, Director of Virtual Learning, 3/26/2024

Comments: A student who completes an employability skills certification program equal to at least one unit of high school credit obtained through classroom or online instruction. \$250.00

Comment: The state should consider offering a minimum of \$1,000.00 for this. The average cost for employability skills certification in Arkansas exceeds \$250.00. A student who attains an industry-recognized credential requiring between fifty and one hundred (50–100) hours of training. \$125.00

Division Response: Comment considered. No changes made.

Commenter Name: Dennis Felton, ResponsivEd – Premier High Schools of Arkansas, Director of Virtual Learning, 3/26/2024

Comments: Comment: The state should consider offering a minimum \$1,000.00 for this. The average cost for employability skills certification in Arkansas exceeds \$250.00. A student who attains an industry-recognized credential requiring more than one hundred (100) hours of training. \$375.00. Comment: The state should consider offering a minimum \$1,000.00 for this. The average cost for employability skills certification in Arkansas exceeds \$250.00. A student who attains a high school diploma. \$500.00 Comment: Arkansas' per pupil expenditures for public K-12 is \$12,139. Whereas, these are adults, this is a significant reduction in funds being

available to purchase essential items for educating an adult. A student who graduates and is placed in a job within an in demand career pathway. \$1,250.00.

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

Commenter Name: Lucas Harder, Arkansas School Boards Association, Policy Services Director, 4/22/2024

Comments: Section 2.20 - The subsections here have flipped numbers so that they should be 2.20.1, 2.20.2, and 2.20.3 instead of the 2.02.1,2.02.2, and 2.02.3 that they currently are.

Division Response: **Comment considered. Nonsubstantives changes were made.**
