

Agenda Item No. ____
Higher Education Coordinating Board
July 26, 2024

RULES GOVERNING THE STATE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

In compliance with Act 237 (Section 56) of 2023, the rules for the State Teacher Education Program are presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for initial approval.

The following resolution is offered for the Board's consideration:

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the State Teacher Education Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the State Teacher Education Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the State Teacher Education Program rules be approved for public comment release.

**DIVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING THE
STATE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM
Effective Date:**

1.00 Program Definitions

- 1.01 “Alternative Educator Preparation Program” means ~~N~~non-traditional licensure program resulting in a valid Arkansas teaching license.
- 1.02 “Approved institution” means a state-supported institution of higher education, a nursing school, or a private nonprofit institution of higher education that:
- 1.02.1 Maintains its primary headquarters in the state;
- 1.02.2 Is eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid program funds; and
- 1.02.3 Is approved by the Division of Higher Education as eligible to participate in the State Teacher Education Program;
- 1.03 “Arkansas Resident” means ~~to be considered an Arkansas resident ADHE,~~ an applicant ~~must be~~ that has been an Arkansas resident for twelve (12) months prior to the application deadline for the financial aid program.
- 1.03.1 Further, the recipient may be asked to provide evidence of a permanent connection with the State of Arkansas, ~~ADHE~~ in which the division will look to one or more of the following to determine residency ~~in those cases:~~
- 1.03.1.1 ~~(A)~~ Valid Arkansas Driver’s License;
- 1.03.1.2 ~~(B)~~ Proof of payment for Arkansas personal ~~and~~ or real taxes for previous year;
- 1.03.1.3 ~~(C)~~ Proof of Arkansas vehicle registration;
- 1.03.1.4 ~~(D)~~ Proof of Arkansas voter registration; and
- 1.03.1.5 ~~(E)~~ Other forms of proof of Arkansas residency.
- 1.04 “Award Year” means ~~T~~the award-year that begins on July 1 of one calendar year, and extends to June 30 of the next calendar year.
- 1.05 “Eligible student” means a student who:
- 1.05.1 Meets the criteria set out in this subchapter; and

1.05.2 Is found to be eligible by rules promulgated by the Division of Higher Education.

1.06 “Geographical Areas of the State Designated as Having Critical Shortages of Teachers” means Any Arkansas school district designated by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education ~~division~~ as having critical teacher shortages.

1.07 “Lawful Permanent Resident” means An individual who can provide documentation from the Immigration and Naturalization Service ~~(INS)~~ that he or she is in the U.S. United States for other than a temporary purpose with the intention of becoming a citizen or permanent resident.

1.07.1 Valid documentation is an I-551, I-151, I-181, I-94, or passport stamped with the notation "Processed for I-551, Temporary Evidence of Lawful Admission for Permanent Residence".

1.07.2 A completed Form G-641 can also be used to document permanent resident status.

1.08 “Subject Matter Designated as Critical Needs in the State of Arkansas” means subject matter shortage areas ~~Annually the Arkansas Department of Education certifies annually by the division subject matter shortage areas~~ based upon the results of surveys obtained from school districts in the state of Arkansas.

1.09 “~~Teach on a Full-time Basis~~” means to ~~Teach~~ the same number of hours required of teachers who have full-time contracts, as determined by the institution or agency in which an individual is teaching, for a minimum of one academic term, as defined by the institution or agency in which an individual is teaching.

1.10 “Teacher Education Program” means a program administered by the Division of Higher Education that provides loan repayments to a licensed teacher who teaches in a subject area or a geographic area with teacher shortage as determined by the Division of Higher Education in consultation with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. ~~A program of study that has been completed at a college or university and results in the receipt of an initial Arkansas teaching license or an additional licensure area to an existing Arkansas teaching license.~~

1.11 “~~U.S. United States Citizen~~” means ~~The term “U.S. citizen” includes persons born or who have become naturalized citizens of;~~

1.11.1 ~~†The 50 States;~~

1.11.2 ~~the District of Columbia;~~

1.11.3 Puerto Rico;

1.11.4 ~~the~~ Virgin Islands;

1.11.5 Guam;

1.11.6 ~~the~~ Northern Mariana Islands; and

1.11.7 Trust Territory- Palau.

1.12 ~~The term "a~~ National" means ~~includes~~ citizens of:

1.12.1 American Samoa; or

1.12.2 Swain's Island.

2.00 ~~Rule 1~~– Organization and Structure

2.01 ~~F. The Arkansas Department~~ Division of Higher Education (~~ADHE~~) shall administer the State Teacher Education Program (~~STEP~~), hereafter known as ~~STEP~~, within the policies set by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

2.01.1 All formal communications shall be addressed to or signed by the ~~Director~~ commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education division or his/ or her designee.

2.02 ~~H. When functioning under Act 1215 of 2009, and any subsequent legislation,~~ ~~ADHE~~ the division shall follow the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act.

3.00 ~~Rule 2~~– Eligibility Criteria

3.01 ~~F.~~ Eligibility Criteria

3.01.1 ~~A.~~ Applicants must be bona fide Arkansas residents, as defined by the Arkansas Department Division of Higher Education, for at least twelve (12) months prior to the application deadline.

3.01.2 ~~B.~~ Applicants must be a citizen of the United States or a lawful permanent resident.

3.01.3 ~~C.~~ Applicant must have graduated from a teacher education program after April 2004; or

3.01.3.1 ~~a.~~ Earned a teaching license upon completion of an alternative educator preparation program.

3.01.4 ~~D~~. Applicant must have outstanding federal student loans.

3.01.5 ~~E~~. Applicant must hold a valid Arkansas teacher's license.

3.01.6 ~~F~~. Applicants must teach full-time at a public school district in Arkansas during the award year and meet one of the additional criteria:

3.01.6.1 ~~a~~. Teach in a subject area with a teacher shortage, as identified by the ~~Arkansas Department of Higher Education~~ division in consultation with the ~~Arkansas Department~~ Division of Elementary and Secondary ~~of Education~~; or

3.01.6.2 ~~b~~. Teach in a geographic area with a teacher shortage, as identified by the ~~Arkansas Department of Higher Education~~ division in consultation with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education ~~Arkansas Department of Education~~;

3.02 II. Continued Eligibility

3.02.1 Recipients shall re-apply for the State Teacher Education Program ~~STEP program~~ annually and continue to meet the eligibility criteria set forth above.

3.02.1.1 A recipient may receive an annual award for a maximum of three (3) years.

4.00 Rule 3– Selection Process

4.01 I. Applications.

4.01.1 ~~A~~. Solicitation of Applicants

4.01.1.1 ~~I~~. Program information will be mailed to the following:

4.01.1.1.1 ~~a~~. K-12 school administrators and other interested personnel;_;

4.01.1.1.2 ~~b~~. Colleges_; Schools_; and Departments of Education_;

4.01.1.1.3 ~~c~~. Financial Aid Directors_; and Officers_;

4.01.1.1.4 ~~d~~. Other college campus personnel, such as advisors, ~~etc.~~ who express an interest in disseminating information to prospective applicants;_;

4.01.1.1.5 ~~e~~- Information is also available upon request from the ~~Arkansas Department~~ Division of Higher Education.

4.01.1.2 ~~2~~. The ~~Arkansas Department of Higher Education~~ division staff will disseminate program information through workshops, meetings, press releases, the ~~Departmental~~ division newsletter, and other means deemed appropriate.

4.01.2 ~~B~~- An online application will be available at the ~~ADHE~~ division's website.

4.01.2.1 The application deadline shall be stated on the application form each year.

4.01.2.2 The ~~ADHE~~ division shall have the authority to extend the deadline as needed to ensure a quality applicant pool so long as sufficient public notice is provided.

4.01.3 ~~C~~- Upon receipt by the division ~~ADHE~~, applications are reviewed to ensure that all pertinent data is included.

4.01.3.1 Each applicant will receive confirmation of the receipt and completeness of the application.

4.01.3.2 For those whose application is either incomplete or ineligible, a notification will be made identifying the reason for incompleteness or ineligibility.

4.01.3.3 The applicant will then have the opportunity to provide the missing information or correct any inaccurate information.

4.01.3.4 Before an applicant can be considered for an award, the corrected/ or missing information must be received by the division ~~ADHE~~ by the deadline indicated in the ~~Incomplete/ or Ineligible~~ Notice.

4.02 ~~H~~- Selection and Notification of Recipients

4.02.1 ~~A~~- The ~~ADHE~~ division shall review applicants and select recipients based on the eligibility criteria for the State Teacher Education Program (~~STEP~~).

4.02.2 ~~B~~- Selected recipients will receive award notices stating their eligibility for the program and the conditions of their award.

4.03 ~~III~~- Ranking of Applicants

4.03.1 Priority for the State Teacher Education Program ~~STEP~~ Repayment grants is as follows:

4.03.1.1 ~~1.~~ First priority is Arkansas teachers teaching in both subject and geographic shortage areas.

4.03.1.2 ~~2.~~ Second priority is Arkansas teachers teaching in subject shortage areas.

4.03.1.3 ~~3.~~ Third priority is Arkansas teachers teaching in geographic shortage areas.

4.03.1.4 ~~4.~~ Fourth priority is Arkansas public school teachers who have completed an alternative educator preparation program.

4.04 ~~III.~~ Disbursement of Award

4.04.1 The award will be disbursed in one (1) disbursement to the federal student loan holder indicated by the applicant.

4.04.1.1 If the award amount is larger than the outstanding loan balance, the award amount will be reduced to the amount of the loan balance.

5.00 ~~Rule 4-~~ Limitations of Loan Repayment

5.01 ~~I.~~ The State Teacher Education Program (~~STEP~~) shall be used to provide:

5.01.1 ~~A.~~ A loan repayment for federal student loans in the amount of ~~three~~ six thousand dollars (~~\$3,000~~ 6,000) per year, for a maximum of three (3) years for each year a licensed teacher who graduated from a teacher education program after April 2004 and teaches in a public school in this state or successfully completed an alternative educator preparation program after April 2004 and teaches in a public school in the program:

5.01.1.1 In a subject matter area designated by the Division of Higher Education, in consultation with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, as having a critical shortage of teachers; and

5.01.1.2 Located in a geographical area of the state designated by the Division of Higher Education, in consultation with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, as having a critical shortage of teachers ~~OR in a subject matter area designated as having a critical shortage of teachers.~~

5.01.2 A licensed teacher who is given intensive support status under the Teacher Excellence and Support System, § 6-17-2801 et seq., shall be ineligible for receipt of funds under the program for the school year.

~~Total term of federal student loan repayment shall not exceed three years.~~

~~B. An additional loan repayment for federal student loans in the amount of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per year for each year a licensed minority teacher, who graduated from a teacher education program after April 2004, teaches in a public school located in a geographical area of the state designated as having a critical shortage of teachers and/or in a subject matter area designated as having a critical shortage of teachers in Arkansas.~~

~~The total term of federal student loan repayment shall not exceed three years.~~

~~For guidance purposes, the terms African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American are based on the Race/Ethnic classifications utilized by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) as follows:~~

~~i. African American = Black/Non-Hispanic: a person having origins in any other black racial groups of Africa.~~

~~ii. Hispanic: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.~~

~~iii. Asian American = Asian or Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast.~~

6.00 Rule 5-- Recipient Responsibility

6.01 ~~I~~ Recipient's Responsibility

6.01.1 It is the recipient's responsibility to notify the ~~Arkansas Department~~ Division of Higher Education of any change in status within twenty-one (21) days.

6.01.2 This will include:

6.01.2.1 Change in name;

6.01.2.2 Change in residence;

6.01.3 Failure to notify the Arkansas Department of Higher Education division of a change in status will affect future eligibility or collection status.

Rule 6 – Program Definitions

The following definitions are used in the State Teacher Education Program:

~~Alternate Educator Preparation Program~~

~~Non-traditional licensure program resulting in a valid Arkansas teaching license.~~

~~Arkansas Resident~~

~~To be considered an Arkansas resident by ADHE, an applicant must be an Arkansas resident for twelve (12) months prior to the application deadline for the financial aid program. Further, the recipient may be asked to provide evidence of a permanent connection with the State of Arkansas. ADHE will look to one or more of the following to determine residency in those cases:~~

- ~~(A) Valid Arkansas Driver's License;~~
- ~~(B) Proof of payment for Arkansas personal and/or real taxes for previous year;~~
- ~~(C) Proof of Arkansas vehicle registration;~~
- ~~(D) Proof of Arkansas voter registration; and~~
- ~~(E) Other forms of proof of Arkansas residency.~~

~~Award Year~~

~~The award year begins on July 1 of one calendar year, and extends to June 30 of the next calendar year.~~

~~Geographical Areas of the State Designated as Having Critical Shortages of Teachers~~

~~Any Arkansas school district designated by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education as having critical teacher shortages.~~

~~Lawful Permanent Resident~~

~~An individual who can provide documentation from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) that he or she is in the U.S. for other than a temporary purpose with the intention of becoming a citizen or permanent resident. Valid documentation is an I-551, I-151, I-181, I-94, or passport stamped with the notation "Processed for I-551, Temporary Evidence of Lawful Admission for Permanent Residence". A completed Form G-641 can also be used to document permanent resident status.~~

~~Subject Matter Designated as Critical Needs in the State of Arkansas~~

~~Annually the Department of Education certifies subject matter shortage Arkansas areas based upon the results of surveys obtained from school districts in the state of Arkansas.~~

~~Teach on a Full-time Basis~~

~~Teach the same number of hours required of teachers who have full-time contracts, as determined by the institution or agency in which an individual is teaching, for a minimum of one academic term, as defined by the institution or agency in which an individual is teaching.~~

~~Teacher Education Program~~

~~A program of study that has been completed at a college or university and results in the receipt of an initial Arkansas teaching license or an additional licensure area to an existing Arkansas teaching license.~~

~~U.S. Citizen~~

~~The term "U.S. citizen" includes persons born or who have become naturalized citizens of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Trust Territory Palau. The term "national" includes citizens of American Samoa or Swain's Island.~~

1 State of Arkansas
2 94th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2023
4

As Engrossed: H2/27/23

A Bill

SENATE BILL 294

5 By: Senators B. Davis, Hester, Irvin, J. Dismang, J. English, G. Stubblefield, Flippo, B. Johnson, D.
6 Wallace, Hill, M. Johnson, K. Hammer, D. Sullivan, Gilmore, M. McKee, C. Penzo, J. Boyd, J. Petty, J.
7 Bryant, Crowell, Stone, Dees, J. Payton, J. Dotson, A. Clark
8 By: Representatives Brooks, M. Shepherd, McCollum, B. McKenzie, Pilkington, S. Meeks, Wardlaw,
9 Eubanks, Cozart, Womack, C. Fite, Lundstrum, Bentley, Gonzales, Beck, K. Brown, Richmond, Fortner,
10 Cavanaugh, Maddox, Barker, Rye, Hollowell, Watson, Lynch, Wing, Crawford, L. Johnson, C. Cooper,
11 Breaux, Evans, McGrew, Ray, Beaty Jr., McClure, Milligan, Haak, John Carr, Underwood, Furman, G.
12 Hodges, J. Moore, Achor, Burkes, Hawk, McAlindon, M. Brown, Rose, Puryear, Gramlich, Painter,
13 Duffield, Unger, R. Scott Richardson, Andrews
14

For An Act To Be Entitled

15 AN ACT TO CREATE THE LEARNS ACT; TO AMEND VARIOUS
16 PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE AS THEY RELATE TO
17 EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH GRADE TWELVE (12) EDUCATION
18 IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY;
19 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
20
21
22

Subtitle

23 TO CREATE THE LEARNS ACT; TO AMEND
24 VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
25 AS THEY RELATE TO EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH
26 GRADE TWELVE EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF
27 ARKANSAS; AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.
28
29
30

31 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

32
33 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Title.

34 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "LEARNS Act".
35

36 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-10-128(d)(1), concerning school resource



1 awarded by the International Baccalaureate.

2 (b) The Division of Higher Education:

3 (1) Shall establish uniform postsecondary criteria for awarding
4 credit to students who have successfully completed the International
5 Baccalaureate Diploma Programme or achieved required scores on one (1) or
6 more CLEP examinations; and

7 (2) May establish uniform postsecondary criteria for awarding
8 credit to students who attain other nationally recognized college-level
9 credentials, including without limitation those attained through:

10 (A) The Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of
11 Education; and

12 (B) Industry-based credentials.

13
14 SECTION 55. Arkansas Code § 6-61-217 is amended to read as follows:

15 6-61-217. Minimum core courses for college and career prep.

16 (a) In order to promote a coordinated system of higher education in
17 Arkansas and to ~~assure~~ ensure an orderly and effective development of each
18 state-supported institution of higher education, the Arkansas Higher
19 Education Coordinating Board, after consultation with the State Board of
20 Education, shall identify a minimum core of high school courses recommended
21 for preparation for college.

22 (b) The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation
23 with the State Board of Education, shall deem a career-ready pathway to a
24 diploma to be equivalent to a standard high school diploma.

25 ~~(b)(c)~~ (c) The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
26 communicate this information at least annually to public school
27 superintendents, who shall make copies available each year to public school
28 students enrolled in grades seven through twelve (7-12).

29 ~~(e)(d)~~ (d) The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board may revise the
30 list of high school courses from time to time, as needed.

31
32 SECTION 56. Arkansas Code § 6-81-1606 is amended to read as follows:

33 6-81-1606. Duration – Amount.

34 (a)(1) The State Teacher Education Program shall be used to provide a
35 loan repayment for federal student loans in the amount of+

36 ~~(1) Three thousand dollars (\$3,000)~~ six thousand dollars

1 (\$6,000) per year for a maximum of three (3) years for a licensed teacher who
 2 graduated from a teacher education program after April 2004 and teaches in a
 3 public school in this state or successfully completed an alternative educator
 4 preparation program after April 2004 and teaches in a public school in the
 5 ~~State Teacher Education Program~~ program:

6 (A) In a subject area designated by the Division of Higher
 7 Education in consultation with the Division of Elementary and Secondary
 8 Education as having a critical shortage of teachers; ~~or~~ and

9 (B) Located in a geographical area of the state designated
 10 by the Division of Higher Education in consultation with the Division of
 11 Elementary and Secondary Education as having a critical shortage of teachers;
 12 ~~and.~~

13 (2) ~~An additional one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per year for a~~
 14 ~~maximum of three (3) years for a licensed teacher who:~~

15 ~~(A) Is a minority;~~

16 ~~(B) Either:~~

17 ~~(i) Graduated from a teacher education program after~~
 18 ~~April 2004; or~~

19 ~~(ii) Successfully completed an alternative educator~~
 20 ~~preparation program; and~~

21 ~~(C) Teaches in a public school in this state~~ A licensed
 22 teacher who is given intensive support status under the Teacher Excellence
 23 and Support System, § 6-17-2801 et seq., shall be ineligible for receipt of
 24 funds under the program for the school year.

25 (b) The Division of Higher Education may spend no more than fifty
 26 thousand dollars (\$50,000) annually for costs associated with the
 27 administration of the State Teacher Education Program.

28 (c) The Division of Higher Education shall promulgate rules necessary
 29 for the implementation of this subchapter.

30
 31 SECTION 57. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 82, is amended to add an
 32 additional subchapter to read as follows:

33 Subchapter 22 – Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship Program Act

34
 35 6-82-2201. Title.

36 This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Arkansas