

REFERENCE TITLE: high schools; graduation requirements

State of Arizona
Senate
Fifty-sixth Legislature
First Regular Session
2023

SB 1425

Introduced by
Senator Wadsack: Representative Jones

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTIONS 15-701.01 AND 15-718, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING
TO SCHOOL CURRICULA.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 15-701.01, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended
3 to read:

4 15-701.01. High schools; graduation; requirements; community
5 college or university courses; transfer from
6 other schools; academic credit; report

7 A. The state board of education shall:

8 1. Prescribe a minimum course of study that incorporates the
9 academic standards adopted by the state board for the graduation of pupils
10 from high school.

11 2. Prescribe competency requirements for the graduation of pupils
12 from high school incorporating the academic standards in at least the
13 areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. The
14 academic standards prescribed by the state board in social studies shall
15 include personal finance, American civics education and a comparative
16 discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism,
17 that conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy that are
18 essential to the founding principles of the United States. The state
19 board may consider establishing a required separate personal finance
20 course for the purpose of the graduation of pupils from high school. The
21 state board shall require at least one-half of a course credit in
22 economics, which shall include financial literacy and personal financial
23 management.

24 3. Through the graduating class of 2025, include in the competency
25 requirements for social studies prescribed in paragraph 2 of this
26 subsection a requirement that, in order to graduate from high school or
27 obtain a high school equivalency diploma, a pupil must correctly answer at
28 least sixty of the one hundred questions listed on a test that is
29 identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the
30 United States citizenship and immigration services. Beginning with the
31 graduating class of 2026, the state board shall include in the competency
32 requirements for social studies prescribed in paragraph 2 of this
33 subsection a requirement that, in order to graduate from high school or
34 obtain a high school equivalency diploma, a pupil must correctly answer at
35 least seventy of the one hundred questions listed on a test that is
36 identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the
37 United States citizenship and immigration services. A district school or
38 charter school shall document on the pupil's transcript only a pass or
39 fail designation that the pupil has passed or failed the test required by
40 this paragraph. A pupil in grade seven or eight may take the test
41 described in this paragraph, and if the pupil correctly answers at least
42 seventy of the one hundred questions on the test:

43 (a) The district school or charter school shall document on the
44 pupil's transcript only a pass or fail designation that the pupil has
45 passed or failed the test required by this paragraph.

1 (b) The pupil is not required to take the test required by this
2 paragraph again in high school.

3 4. INCLUDE IN THE COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES
4 PRESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF THIS SUBSECTION A REQUIREMENT THAT, IN ORDER
5 TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR OBTAIN A HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA,
6 A PUPIL MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE A COURSE OR COURSES THAT PROVIDE THE
7 INSTRUCTION ON BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING:

8 (a) AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE CIVICS EDUCATION PRESCRIBED
9 IN SECTIONS 15-710 AND 15-718.

10 (b) AMERICAN HISTORY, INCLUDING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR, THE CIVIL
11 WAR, WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II.

12 ~~4.~~ 5. Develop and adopt competency tests pursuant to section
13 15-741. English language learners who are subject to article 3.1 of this
14 chapter are subject to the assessments prescribed in section 15-741.

15 B. The governing board of a school district shall:

16 1. Prescribe curricula that include the academic standards in the
17 required subject areas pursuant to subsection A, paragraph 1 of this
18 section.

19 2. Prescribe criteria for the graduation of pupils from the high
20 schools in the school district. These criteria shall include
21 accomplishment of the academic standards in at least reading, writing,
22 mathematics, science and social studies, as determined by district
23 assessment. Other criteria may include additional measures of academic
24 achievement and attendance. Pursuant to the prescribed graduation
25 requirements adopted by the state board of education, the governing board
26 may approve a rigorous computer science course that would fulfill a
27 mathematics course required for graduation from high school. The
28 governing board may approve a rigorous computer science course only if the
29 rigorous computer science course includes significant mathematics content
30 and the governing board determines the high school where the rigorous
31 computer science course is offered has sufficient capacity, infrastructure
32 and qualified staff, including competent teachers of computer science.
33 The school district governing board or charter school governing body may
34 determine the method and manner in which to administer a test that is
35 identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the
36 United States citizenship and immigration services. A pupil who does not
37 obtain a passing score on the test that is identical to the civics portion
38 of the naturalization test may retake the test until the pupil obtains a
39 passing score.

40 C. The governing board may prescribe the course of study and
41 competency requirements for the graduation of pupils from high school that
42 are in addition to or higher than the course of study and competency
43 requirements that the state board prescribes.

1 D. The governing board may prescribe competency requirements for
 2 the passage of pupils in courses that are required for graduation from
 3 high school.

4 E. A teacher shall determine whether to pass or fail a pupil in a
 5 course in high school on the basis of the competency requirements, if any
 6 have been prescribed. The governing board, if it reviews the decision of
 7 a teacher to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school as provided
 8 in section 15-342, paragraph 11, shall base its decision on the competency
 9 requirements, if any have been prescribed.

10 F. Graduation requirements established by the governing board may
 11 be met by a pupil who passes courses in the required or elective subjects
 12 at a community college or university, if the course is at a higher level
 13 than the course taught in the high school attended by the pupil or, if the
 14 course is not taught in the high school, the level of the course is equal
 15 to or higher than the level of a high school course. The governing board
 16 shall determine whether the subject matter of the community college or
 17 university course is appropriate to the specific requirement the pupil
 18 intends it to fulfill and whether the level of the community college or
 19 university course is less than, equal to or higher than a high school
 20 course, and the governing board shall award at least one-half of a
 21 Carnegie unit and up to and including one Carnegie unit for each three
 22 semester hours of credit that the pupil earns in an appropriate community
 23 college or university course. If a pupil is not satisfied with the
 24 decision of the governing board regarding the amount of credit granted or
 25 the subjects for which credit is granted, the pupil may request that the
 26 state board of education review the decision of the governing board, and
 27 the state board shall make the final determination of the amount of credit
 28 to be given the pupil and for which subjects. The governing board shall
 29 not limit the number of credits that is required for high school
 30 graduation and that may be met by taking community college or university
 31 courses. For the purposes of this subsection:

32 1. "Community college" means an educational institution that is
 33 operated by a community college district as defined in section 15-1401 or
 34 a postsecondary educational institution under the jurisdiction of an
 35 Indian tribe recognized by the United States department of the interior.

36 2. "University" means a university under the jurisdiction of the
 37 Arizona board of regents.

38 G. A pupil who transfers from a private school shall be provided
 39 with a list that indicates those credits that have been accepted and
 40 denied by the school district. A pupil may request to take an examination
 41 in each particular course in which credit has been denied. The school
 42 district shall accept the credit for each particular course in which the
 43 pupil takes an examination and receives a passing score on a test designed
 44 and evaluated by a teacher in the school district who teaches the subject
 45 matter on which the examination is based. In addition to the above

1 requirements, the governing board of a school district may prescribe
2 requirements for the acceptance of the credits of pupils who transfer from
3 a private school.

4 H. If a pupil who was previously enrolled in a charter school or
5 school district enrolls in a school district in this state, the school
6 district shall accept credits earned by the pupil in courses or
7 instructional programs at the charter school or school district. The
8 governing board of a school district may adopt a policy concerning the
9 application of transfer credits for the purpose of determining whether a
10 credit earned by a pupil who was previously enrolled in a school district
11 or charter school will be assigned as an elective or core credit. A
12 school district or charter school may note the learning outcomes that a
13 student mastered as prescribed in the rules adopted pursuant to section
14 15-203, subsection A, paragraph 38 to provide a record of the demonstrated
15 competencies and award partial credit.

16 I. A pupil who transfers credit from a charter school, a school
17 district or Arizona online instruction shall be provided with a list that
18 indicates which credits have been accepted as elective credits and which
19 credits have been accepted as core credits by the school district or
20 charter school. Within ten school days after receiving the list, the
21 pupil may request to take an examination in each particular course in
22 which core credit has been denied. The school district or charter school
23 shall accept the credit as a core credit for each particular course in
24 which the pupil takes an examination and receives a passing score on a
25 test that is aligned to the competency requirements adopted pursuant to
26 this section and that is designed and evaluated by a teacher in the school
27 district or charter school who teaches the subject matter on which the
28 examination is based. If a pupil is enrolled in a school district or
29 charter school and that pupil also participates in Arizona online
30 instruction between May 1 and July 31, the school district or charter
31 school shall not require proof of payment as a condition of the school
32 district or charter school accepting credits earned from the online course
33 provider.

34 J. The state board of education shall adopt rules to allow high
35 school pupils who can demonstrate competency in a particular academic
36 course or subject to obtain academic credit for the course or subject
37 without enrolling in the course or subject.

38 K. Pupils who earn a Grand Canyon diploma pursuant to article 6 of
39 this chapter are exempt from the graduation requirements prescribed in
40 this section. Pupils who earn a Grand Canyon diploma are entitled to all
41 the rights and privileges of persons who graduate with a high school
42 diploma issued pursuant to this section, including access to postsecondary
43 scholarships and other forms of student financial aid and access to all
44 forms of postsecondary education. Notwithstanding any other law, a pupil
45 who is eligible for a Grand Canyon diploma may elect to remain in high

1 school through grade twelve and shall not be prevented from enrolling at a
2 high school after the pupil becomes eligible for a Grand Canyon diploma.
3 A pupil who is eligible for a Grand Canyon diploma and who elects not to
4 pursue one of the options prescribed in section 15-792.03 may only be
5 readmitted to that high school or another high school in this state
6 pursuant to policies adopted by the school district of readmission.

7 L. Each school district and charter school shall report to the
8 department of education all of the following aggregate data, organized by
9 grade level, relating to the test that is identical to the civics portion
10 of the naturalization test used by the United States citizenship and
11 immigration services required by subsection A, paragraph 3 of this
12 section:

13 1. The median score.

14 2. The percentage of pupils who passed by correctly answering the
15 minimum number of questions required to pass the test pursuant to
16 subsection A, paragraph 3 of this section.

17 3. The percentage of pupils who failed by correctly answering fewer
18 than the minimum number of questions required to pass the test pursuant to
19 subsection A, paragraph 3 of this section.

20 4. Any other data required by the department relating to the test.

21 M. A school district or charter school may not include the
22 personally identifiable information of any pupil in the data reported to
23 the department of education under subsection L of this section. The
24 department of education shall make the data publicly available, organized
25 at a minimum by school district or charter school and grade level, on the
26 website that includes the school report cards required by section 15-746.

27 Sec. 2. Section 15-718, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to
28 read:

29 15-718. Civics instruction

30 To help families, civic institutions, local communities, school
31 district governing boards and charter schools prepare students to be
32 civically responsible and knowledgeable adults, the state board of
33 education shall work with the school of civic and economic thought and
34 leadership at Arizona state university, the center for the philosophy of
35 freedom at the university of Arizona and the Sandra Day O'Connor institute
36 to:

37 1. Develop civic education standards that school districts and
38 charter schools must include pursuant to section 15-701.01. The civic
39 education standards must include instruction on:

40 (a) The original intent of the founding documents and principles of
41 the United States as found in source documents, **INCLUDING THE UNITED
42 STATES CONSTITUTION AND AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, WITH EMPHASIS ON
43 EACH OF THE TEN AMENDMENTS THAT MAKE UP THE BILL OF RIGHTS, AND THE
44 ARGUMENTS PRESENTED IN THE FEDERALIST PAPERS.**

1 (b) The civic-minded expectations of an upright and desirable
2 citizenry that recognizes and accepts responsibility for preserving and
3 defending the blessings of liberty inherited from prior generations and
4 secured by the United States constitution.

5 2. On or before December 31, 2022, establish and maintain a list of
6 oral history resources to be used along with the civic education standards
7 and social studies standards that provide portraits in patriotism based on
8 first-person accounts of victims of other nations' governing philosophies
9 who can compare those philosophies with those of the United States.