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REFERENCE TITLE: high school graduation; requirements

State of Arizona Senate Fifty-seventh Legislature First Regular Session 2025

SB 1028

Introduced by Senator Kavanagh

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTIONS 15-701.01, 15-702 AND 15-808, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

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42 43 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona: Section 1. Section 15-701.01, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

15-701.01. <u>High schools; graduation; requirements; community college or university courses; transfer from other schools; academic credit; report</u>

- A. The state board of education shall:
- 1. Prescribe a minimum course of study that incorporates the academic standards adopted by the state board for the graduation of pupils from high school.
- 2. Prescribe competency requirements for the graduation of pupils from high school incorporating the academic standards in at least the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies AND THE MINIMUM PERFORMANCE LEVEL REQUIREMENT DETERMINED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION B, PARAGRAPH 1 OF THIS SECTION. The academic standards prescribed by the state board in social studies shall include personal finance, American civics education and a comparative discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, that conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy that are essential to the founding principles of the United States. The state board may consider establishing a required separate personal finance course for the purpose of the graduation of pupils from high school. The state board shall require at least one-half of a course credit in economics, which shall include financial literacy and personal financial management.
- 3. Through the graduating class of 2025, include in the competency requirements for social studies prescribed in paragraph 2 of this subsection a requirement that, in order to graduate from high school or obtain a high school equivalency diploma, a pupil must correctly answer at least sixty of the one hundred questions listed on a test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States citizenship and immigration services. Beginning with the graduating class of 2026, the state board shall include in the competency requirements for social studies prescribed in paragraph 2 of this subsection a requirement that, in order to graduate from high school or obtain a high school equivalency diploma, a pupil must correctly answer at least seventy of the one hundred questions listed on a test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States citizenship and immigration services. A district school or charter school shall document on the pupil's transcript only a pass or fail designation that the pupil has passed or failed the test required by this paragraph. A pupil in grade seven or eight may take the test described in this paragraph, and if the pupil correctly answers at least seventy of the one hundred questions on the test:

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- (a) The district school or charter school shall document on the pupil's transcript only a pass or fail designation that the pupil has passed or failed the test required by this paragraph.
- (b) The pupil is not required to take the test required by this paragraph again in high school.
- 4. Develop and adopt competency tests pursuant to section 15-741. English language learners who are subject to article 3.1 of this chapter are subject to the assessments prescribed in section 15-741.
 - B. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL:
- 1. ESTABLISH A METHOD AND STANDARD FOR DETERMINING THE MINIMUM PERFORMANCE LEVEL ON THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-741 REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL.
- 2. NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 15-741, SUBSECTION B, PRESCRIBE A SCHEDULE FOR ADMINISTERING THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-741 TO PUPILS IN HIGH SCHOOL. THE SCHEDULE PRESCRIBED PURSUANT TO THIS PARAGRAPH MUST PROVIDE AT LEAST TWO OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUPILS TO TAKE THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT IN EACH OF GRADES ELEVEN AND TWELVE.
- C. NOTWITHSTANDING CHAPTER 7, ARTICLE 3 OF THIS TITLE AND SUBSECTION A OF THIS SECTION, A PUPIL IS NOT REQUIRED TO PASS AN ASSESSMENT ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-741 OR 15-741.02 IN GRADE ELEVEN OR TWELVE TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL IF THE PUPIL EITHER:
- 1. OBTAINS A PASSING SCORE ON A TECHNICAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST FOR A CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT IS APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
- 2. OBTAINS AN INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION THROUGH A CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT IS APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
- D. A PUPIL WHO HAS AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM OR A SECTION 504 PLAN AS DEFINED IN SECTION 15-731 IS NOT REQUIRED TO PASS THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL. THE PUPIL'S INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM OR SECTION 504 PLAN SHALL INCLUDE ANY NECESSARY TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 15-763.
 - B. The governing board of a school district shall:
- 1. Prescribe curricula that include the academic standards in the required subject areas pursuant to subsection A, paragraph ${\bf 1}$ of this section.
- 2. Prescribe criteria for the graduation of pupils from the high district. These schools the school criteria shall accomplishment of the academic standards in at least reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies, as determined by district assessment AND BY EITHER THE MINIMUM PERFORMANCE LEVEL ON THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT DETERMINED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION B, PARAGRAPH 1 OF THIS SECTION OR SATISFACTION OF THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER SUBSECTION C OF THIS SECTION. Other criteria may include additional measures of academic Pursuant to the prescribed graduation achievement and attendance. requirements adopted by the state board of education, the governing board

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 may approve a rigorous computer science course that would fulfill a mathematics course required for graduation from high school. The governing board may approve a rigorous computer science course only if the rigorous computer science course includes significant mathematics content and the governing board determines the high school where the rigorous computer science course is offered has sufficient capacity, infrastructure and qualified staff, including competent teachers of computer science. The school district governing board or charter school governing body may determine the method and manner in which to administer a test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States citizenship and immigration services. A pupil who does not obtain a passing score on the test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test may retake the test until the pupil obtains a passing score.

C. F. The governing board OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT may:

- 1. Prescribe the course of study and competency requirements for the graduation of pupils from high school that are in addition to or higher than the course of study and competency requirements that the state board prescribes PRESCRIBED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.
- 2. PROVIDE TO PUPILS IN GRADE NINE OR TEN, OR BOTH, ANY INSTRUCTION, MATERIALS OR OTHER SERVICES NECESSARY TO PREPARE FOR THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-741.
- $rac{ extsf{D.}}{ extsf{C}}$ G. The governing board may prescribe competency requirements for the passage of pupils in courses that are required for graduation from high school.
- E. H. A teacher shall determine whether to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school on the basis of the competency requirements, if any have been prescribed. The governing board, if it reviews the decision of a teacher to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11, shall base its decision on the competency requirements, if any have been prescribed.
- may be met by a pupil who passes courses in the required or elective subjects at a community college or university, if the course is at a higher level than the course taught in the high school attended by the pupil or, if the course is not taught in the high school, the level of the course is equal to or higher than the level of a high school course. The governing board shall determine whether the subject matter of the community college or university course is appropriate to the specific requirement the pupil intends it to fulfill and whether the level of the community college or university course is less than, equal to or higher than a high school course, and the governing board shall award at least one-half of a Carnegie unit and up to and including one Carnegie unit for each three semester hours of credit that the pupil earns in an appropriate community college or university course. If a pupil is not satisfied with

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 the decision of the governing board regarding the amount of credit granted or the subjects for which credit is granted, the pupil may request that the state board of education review the decision of the governing board, and the state board shall make the final determination of the amount of credit to be given the pupil and for which subjects. The governing board shall not limit the number of credits that is required for high school graduation and that may be met by taking community college or university courses. For the purposes of this subsection:

- 1. "Community college" means an educational institution that is operated by a community college district as defined in section 15-1401 or a postsecondary educational institution under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe recognized by the United States department of the interior.
- 2. "University" means a university under the jurisdiction of the Arizona board of regents.
- G. J. A pupil who transfers from a private school shall be provided with a list that indicates those credits that have been accepted and denied by the school district. A pupil may request to take an examination in each particular course in which credit has been denied. The school district shall accept the credit for each particular course in which the pupil takes an examination and receives a passing score on a test designed and evaluated by a teacher in the school district who teaches the subject matter on which the examination is based. In addition to the above requirements, the governing board of a school district may prescribe requirements for the acceptance of the credits of pupils who transfer from a private school.
- H. K. If a pupil who was previously enrolled in a charter school or school district enrolls in a school district in this state, the school district shall accept credits earned by the pupil in courses or instructional programs at the charter school or school district. The governing board of a school district may adopt a policy concerning the application of transfer credits for the purpose of determining whether a credit earned by a pupil who was previously enrolled in a school district or charter school will be assigned as an elective or core credit. A school district or charter school may note the learning outcomes that a student mastered as prescribed in the rules adopted pursuant to section 15-203, subsection A, paragraph 38 to provide a record of the demonstrated competencies and award partial credit.
- I. L. A pupil who transfers credit from a charter school, a school district or Arizona online instruction shall be provided with a list that indicates which credits have been accepted as elective credits and which credits have been accepted as core credits by the school district or charter school. Within ten school days after receiving the list, the pupil may request to take an examination in each particular course in which core credit has been denied. The school district or charter school shall accept the credit as a core credit for each particular course in

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which the pupil takes an examination and receives a passing score on a test that is aligned to the competency requirements adopted pursuant to this section and that is designed and evaluated by a teacher in the school district or charter school who teaches the subject matter on which the examination is based. If a pupil is enrolled in a school district or charter school and that pupil also participates in Arizona online instruction between May 1 and July 31, the school district or charter school shall not require proof of payment as a condition of the school district or charter school accepting credits earned from the online course provider.

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

K. N. Pupils who earn a Grand Canyon diploma pursuant to article 6 of this chapter are exempt from the graduation requirements prescribed in this section. Pupils who earn a Grand Canyon diploma are entitled to all the rights and privileges of persons who graduate with a high school diploma issued pursuant to this section, including access to postsecondary scholarships and other forms of student financial aid and access to all forms of postsecondary education. Notwithstanding any other law, a pupil who is eligible for a Grand Canyon diploma may elect to remain in high school through grade twelve and shall not be prevented from enrolling at a high school after the pupil becomes eligible for a Grand Canyon diploma. A pupil who is eligible for a Grand Canyon diploma and who elects not to pursue one of the options prescribed in section 15-792.03 may only be readmitted to that high school or another high school in this state pursuant to policies adopted by the school district of readmission.

- t. O. Each school district and charter school shall report to the department of education all of the following aggregate data, organized by grade level, relating to the test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States citizenship and immigration services required by subsection A, paragraph 3 of this section:
 - 1. The median score.
- 2. The percentage of pupils who passed by correctly answering the minimum number of questions required to pass the test pursuant to subsection A, paragraph 3 of this section.
- 3. The percentage of pupils who failed by correctly answering fewer than the minimum number of questions required to pass the test pursuant to subsection A, paragraph 3 of this section.
 - 4. Any other data required by the department relating to the test.

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 M. P. A school district or charter school may not include the personally identifiable information of any pupil in the data reported to the department of education under subsection t0 of this section. The department of education shall make the data publicly available, organized at a minimum by school district or charter school and grade level, on the website that includes the school report cards required by section 15-746.

Sec. 2. Section 15-702, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

15-702. High school equivalency diploma; fees; rules

- A. Any person who is sixteen years of age or older and who passes an equivalency test adopted by the state board of education shall be awarded an Arizona high school equivalency diploma by the state board of education and the state superintendent of public instruction. The state board of education may establish eligibility requirements for persons wishing to take an THE equivalency test adopted by the state board of education, except that the minimum age required to take the test may not be older than sixteen nor shall AND the board MAY NOT require the completion of any high school credits.
- B. A person who meets the minimum course of study and competency requirements prescribed by the state board of education for graduation from high school through a combination of high school credits and community college and university credits, which are converted to high school credits in the same manner as provided in section 15-701.01, subsection F I by the SCHOOL DISTRICT governing board or the state board of education, shall be awarded an Arizona high school equivalency diploma.
- C. The state board of education may establish and collect fees for the issuance ISSUING and reissuance of REISSUING the following:
 - 1. A high school equivalency diploma.
 - 2. A high school equivalency transcript.
- D. The state board of education shall adopt rules for fee waivers for the high school equivalency diploma and high school equivalency transcripts.
- Sec. 3. Section 15-808, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

15-808. Arizona online instruction; reports; definitions

- A. Arizona online instruction shall be instituted to meet the needs of pupils in the information age. The state board of education shall select district public schools and state-approved charter authorizers shall sponsor charter schools to be online course providers or online schools. The state board of education and state-approved charter authorizers shall develop standards for the approval of online course providers and online schools based on the following criteria:
 - 1. The depth and breadth of curriculum choices.
- 2. The variety of educational methodologies employed by the school and the means of addressing the unique needs and learning styles of

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44 45 targeted pupil populations, including computer-assisted learning systems, virtual classrooms, virtual laboratories, electronic field trips, e-mail EMAIL, virtual tutoring, online help desk, group chat sessions and noncomputer-based activities performed under the direction of a certificated teacher.

- 3. The availability of an intranet or private network to safeguard pupils against predatory and pornographic elements of the internet.
 - 4. The availability of filtered research access to the internet.
- 5. The availability of private individual e-mail EMAIL between pupils, teachers, administrators and parents in order to protect the confidentiality of pupil records and information.
- 6. The availability of faculty members who are experienced with computer networks, the internet and computer animation.
- 7. The extent to which the school intends to develop partnerships with universities, community colleges and private businesses.
- 8. The services offered to populations with developmental disabilities.
 - 9. The grade levels that will be served.
- B. Each new school that provides online instruction shall provide online instruction on a probationary status. After a new school that provides online instruction has clearly demonstrated the integrity of its instruction through the actual improvement of the academic performance of its students, the school may apply to be removed status. The state board from probationary of education state-approved charter authorizer that sponsored the charter school shall remove from Arizona online instruction any probationary school that fails to clearly demonstrate improvement in academic performance within three years measured against goals in the approved application and the state's accountability system. All pupils who participate in Arizona online instruction shall reside in this state. Pupils who participate in Arizona online instruction are subject to the testing requirements prescribed in chapter 7, article 3 of this title. On enrollment, the school shall notify the parents or guardians of the pupil of the state testing requirements. If a pupil fails to comply with the testing requirements and the school administers the tests pursuant to this subsection to less than ninety-five percent of the pupils in Arizona online instruction, the pupil shall not be allowed to participate in Arizona online instruction.
- C. The state board of education and state-approved charter authorizers shall develop annual reporting mechanisms for schools that participate in Arizona online instruction.
- D. The department of education shall compile the information submitted in the annual reports by schools participating in Arizona online instruction. The department of education shall submit the compiled report to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate by November 15 of each year.

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- E. Each school selected for Arizona online instruction shall ensure that a daily log is maintained for each pupil who participates in Arizona online instruction. The daily log shall describe the amount of time spent by each pupil participating in Arizona online instruction pursuant to this section on academic tasks. The daily log shall be used by the school district or charter school to qualify the pupils who participate in Arizona online instruction in the school's average daily attendance calculations pursuant to subsection F of this section.
- F. If a pupil is enrolled in a school district or charter school and also participates in Arizona online instruction, the sum of the average daily membership, which includes enrollment as prescribed in section 15-901, subsection A, paragraph 1, subdivisions (a) and (b) and daily attendance as prescribed in section 15-901, subsection A, paragraph 5, for that pupil in the school district or charter school and in Arizona online instruction shall not exceed 1.0. If the pupil is enrolled in a school district or a charter school and also participates in Arizona online instruction and the sum of the daily membership or daily attendance for that pupil is greater than 1.0, the sum shall be reduced to 1.0 and shall be apportioned between the school district, unless the school district is a career technical education district subject to apportionment requirements of section 15-393, or charter school Arizona online instruction based on the percentage of total time that the pupil is enrolled or in attendance in the school district or charter school and Arizona online instruction. The uniform system of financial records shall include guidelines for the apportionment of the pupil enrollment and attendance as provided in this subsection. Pupils in Arizona online instruction do not incur absences for purposes of this subsection and may generate an average daily attendance of 1.0 for attendance hours during any hour of the day, during any day of the week and at any time between July 1 and June 30 of each fiscal year. kindergarten programs and grades one through eight, average daily membership shall be calculated by dividing the instructional hours as reported in the daily log required in subsection E of this section by the applicable hourly requirements prescribed in section 15-901. For grades nine through twelve, average daily membership shall be calculated by dividing the instructional hours as reported in the daily log required in subsection E of this section by nine hundred. The average daily membership of a pupil who participates in online instruction shall not exceed 1.0. Average daily membership shall not be calculated on the one hundredth day of instruction for the purposes of this section. Funding shall be determined as follows:
- 1. A pupil who is enrolled full-time FULL TIME in Arizona online instruction shall be funded for online instruction at ninety-five percent of the base support level that would be calculated for that pupil if that pupil were enrolled as a full-time student in a school district or charter

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school that does not participate in Arizona online instruction. Charter additional assistance and district additional assistance shall be calculated in the same manner they would be calculated if the student were enrolled in a district or charter school that does not participate in Arizona online instruction.

- 2. A pupil who is enrolled part-time PART TIME in Arizona online instruction shall be funded for online instruction at eighty-five percent of the base support level that would be calculated for that pupil if that pupil were enrolled as a part-time student in a school district or charter school that does not participate in Arizona online instruction. Charter additional assistance and district additional assistance shall be calculated in the same manner they would be calculated if the student were enrolled in a district or charter school that does not participate in Arizona online instruction.
- G. If the academic achievement of a pupil declines while the pupil is participating in Arizona online instruction, the pupil's parents, the pupil's teachers and the principal or head teacher of the school shall confer to evaluate whether the pupil should be allowed to continue to participate in Arizona online instruction.
- H. To ensure the academic integrity of pupils who participate in online instruction, Arizona online instruction shall include multiple diverse assessment measures and the proctored administration of required state standardized tests.
- I. A school district or charter school may not charge a fee to a pupil who takes an examination in a particular course to obtain academic credit, pursuant to section 15-701.01, subsection $\frac{1}{1}$ L, from the school district or charter school if the academic credit for a course was previously earned in an Arizona online instruction course or at any public school in this state. Any test administered pursuant to this subsection shall be an assessment that is aligned to the course-relevant state academic standards.
 - J. For the purposes of this section:
 - 1. "Full-time student" means:
- (a) A student who is at least five years of age before September 1 of a school year and who is enrolled in a school kindergarten program that meets at least three hundred forty-six hours during the school year.
- (b) A student who is at least six years of age before September 1 of a school year, who has not graduated from the highest grade taught in the school and who is regularly enrolled in a course of study required by the state board of education. For first, second and third grade students, the instructional program shall meet at least seven hundred twelve hours. For fourth, fifth and sixth grade students, the instructional program shall meet at least eight hundred ninety hours during the school year.

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- (c) Seventh and eighth grade students or ungraded students who are at least twelve, but under fourteen, years of age on or before September 1 and who are enrolled in an instructional program of courses that meets at least one thousand sixty-eight hours during the school year.
- (d) For high schools, a student who has not graduated from the highest grade taught in the school district, or an ungraded student who is at least fourteen years of age on or before September 1, and who is enrolled in at least four courses throughout the year that meet at least nine hundred hours during the school year. A full-time student shall not be counted more than once for computation of average daily membership.
- 2. "Online course provider" means a school other than an online school that is selected by the state board of education or a state-approved charter authorizer to participate in Arizona online instruction pursuant to this section and that provides at least one online academic course that is approved by the state board of education.
- 3. "Online school" means a school that provides at least four online academic courses or one or more online courses for the equivalent of at least five hours each day for one hundred eighty school days and that is a charter school that is sponsored by a state-approved charter authorizer or a district public school that is selected by the state board of education to participate in Arizona online instruction.
 - 4. "Part-time student" means:
- (a) Any student who is enrolled in a program that does not meet the definition in paragraph 1 of this subsection shall be funded at eighty-five percent of the base support level that would be calculated for that pupil if that pupil were enrolled as a part-time student in a school district or charter school that does not participate in Arizona online instruction.
- (b) A part-time student of seventy-five percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least three subjects throughout the year that offer for first, second and third grade students at least five hundred thirty-four instructional hours in a school year and for fourth, fifth and sixth grade students at least six hundred sixty-eight instructional hours in a school year. A part-time student of fifty percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least two subjects throughout the year that offer for first, second and third grade students at least three hundred fifty-six instructional hours in a school year and for fourth, fifth and sixth grade students at least four hundred forty-five instructional hours in a school year. A part-time student of twenty-five percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least one subject throughout the year that offers for first, second and third grade students at least one hundred seventy-eight instructional hours in a school year and for fourth, fifth and sixth grade students at least two hundred twenty-three instructional hours in a school year.

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- (c) For seventh and eighth grade students, a part-time student of seventy-five percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least three subjects throughout the year that offer at least eight hundred one instructional hours in a school year. A part-time student of fifty percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least two subjects throughout the year that offer at least five hundred thirty-four instructional hours in a school year. A part-time student of twenty-five percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least one subject throughout the year that offers at least two hundred sixty-seven instructional hours in a school year.
- (d) For high school students, a part-time student of seventy-five percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least three subjects throughout the year that offer at least six hundred seventy-five instructional hours in a school year. A part-time student of fifty percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least two subjects throughout the year that offer at least four hundred fifty instructional hours in a school year. A part-time student of twenty-five percent average daily membership shall be enrolled in at least one subject throughout the year that offers at least two hundred twenty-five instructional hours in a school year.
- 5. "State-approved charter authorizer" means any charter school sponsor authorized pursuant to section 15-183.

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