

An Act

ENROLLED HOUSE
BILL NO. 1425

By: Staires, West (Kevin),
Wolfley, Conley, and Hill
of the House

and

Rader, Stanley, Bullard,
and Hamilton of the Senate

An Act relating to schools; defining term; directing each school district board of education to adopt certain policy excusing a student to attend certain course; providing requirements for student to attend certain course; providing certain immunity from liability; exempting instructors of certain course from licensure or certification; directing students to be considered in attendance with a school district while attending certain course; providing for the award of elective credit for completion of certain course; providing for evaluation of certain course; providing exemption for certain charter schools and virtual charter schools; and providing for codification.

SUBJECT: Schools

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 11-101.3 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. As used in this section, "released time course" means a period of time during which a student is excused from school to attend a course in religious or moral instruction taught by an independent entity off school property.

B. Each school district board of education shall adopt a policy that excuses a student from school to attend a released time course for no more than three class periods per week or a maximum of one hundred twenty-five class periods per school year; provided, that:

1. The student's parent or legal guardian provides written consent prior to the student's participation in the released time course;

2. No school district funds other than de minimis administrative costs are expended and no school district personnel, equipment, or resources are involved in providing the instruction;

3. The independent entity maintains attendance records and makes them available to the school district and its board of education;

4. Any transportation provided to and from the place of instruction is the sole responsibility of the independent entity, the student, or the student's parent or legal guardian;

5. The independent entity or the student's parent or legal guardian indemnifies the school district and holds it harmless with regard to any liability arising from conduct that does not occur on school property under the control or supervision of the school district, and the independent entity maintains adequate insurance for that purpose;

6. The student assumes responsibility for any missed school work; and

7. The school district superintendent, the principal for the school site in which the student is enrolled, or their designees have reasonable discretion over the scheduling and timing of released time courses; provided, the student may not be excused to participate in a released time course during any class in which the subject matter being taught is subject to the assessment requirements of Section 1210.508 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

C. The school district, its board of education, and the state shall not be liable for the student who participates in a released time course when the student is not under the control or supervision of the school district.

D. Instructors hired by an independent entity to provide a released time course shall not be required to be licensed or certified teachers.

E. A student who attends a released time course shall be considered in attendance in the school district, and the time shall be calculated as part of the school day.

F. A school district board of education shall award a student credit for work completed in a released time course that is substantiated by a transcript from the independent entity providing the course. A student shall be awarded elective credit for the completion of each released time course. To determine whether elective credit may be awarded as provided for in this subsection, the board of education shall evaluate the course in a neutral and secular manner that does not involve any test for religious content or denominational affiliation. For purposes of this subsection, the secular criteria used to evaluate a released time course may include:

1. The amount of classroom instruction time;
2. The course syllabus, which reflects the course requirements and any materials used in the course;
3. Methods of assessment used in the course; and
4. The qualifications of the course instructor.

G. The provisions of this section shall not apply to charter schools established pursuant to Section 3-132 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes or charter schools or virtual charter schools established pursuant to Section 3-134 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

Passed the House of Representatives the 29th day of May, 2024.

Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

Passed the Senate the 16th day of April, 2024.

Presiding Officer of the Senate

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Received by the Office of the Governor this _____

day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____ M.

By: _____

Approved by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma this _____

day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____ M.

Governor of the State of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Received by the Office of the Secretary of State this _____

day of _____, 20_____, at _____ o'clock _____ M.

By: _____