

SENATE BILL NO. 957

101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR BEAN.

4473S.01I

ADRIANE D. CROUSE, Secretary

AN ACT

To amend chapter 173, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to the workforce diploma program.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 173, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 173.831, to read as follows:

173.831. 1. As used in this section, the following terms mean:

(1) "Academic skill intake assessment", a criterion-referenced assessment of numeracy and literacy skills with high reliability and validity as determined by third party research;

(2) "Adult dropout recovery services", includes, but is not limited to, sourcing, recruitment, and engagement of eligible students, learning plan development, active teaching, and proactive coaching and mentoring, resulting in an accredited high school diploma;

(3) "Approved program provider", a public, not-for-profit, or other entity that meets the requirements of subdivision (2) of subsection 3 of this section;

(4) "Average cost per graduate", the amount of the total program funding reimbursed to a provider divided by the total graduates for a cohort year;

18 (5) "Career pathways coursework", one or more courses
19 that align with the skill needs of industries in the economy
20 of the state or region that help an individual enter or
21 advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

22 (6) "Career placement services", services designed to
23 assist students in obtaining employment, including career
24 interest self-assessments and job search skills, including
25 resume development and mock interviews;

26 (7) "Coaching", proactive communication between the
27 approved program provider and the student related to the
28 student's pace and progress through the student's learning
29 plan;

30 (8) "Department", the department of higher education
31 and workforce development;

32 (9) "Employability skills certification", a
33 certificate earned by demonstrating professional
34 nontechnical skills through assessment, portfolio, or
35 observation;

36 (10) "Graduate", a student who has successfully
37 completed all of the state and approved program provider
38 requirements in order to obtain a high school diploma;

39 (11) "Graduation rate", the total number of graduates
40 for the fiscal year divided by all students for the fiscal
41 year for whom the approved program provider has received
42 funding, calculated one fiscal year in arrears;

43 (12) "Graduation requirements", course and credit
44 requirements for the approved program provider's accredited
45 high school diploma;

46 (13) "High school diploma", a diploma issued by an
47 accredited institution;

48 (14) "Industry-recognized credential", an education-
49 related credential or work-related credential that verifies

50 an individual's qualification or competence issued by a
51 third party with the relevant authority to issue such
52 credentials;

53 (15) "Learning plan", a documented plan for courses or
54 credits needed for each individual in order to complete
55 program and approved program provider graduation
56 requirements;

57 (16) "Mentoring", a direct relationship between a
58 coach and a student to facilitate the completion of the
59 student's learning plan designed to prepare the student to
60 succeed in the program and the student's future endeavors;

61 (17) "Milestones", objective measures of progress for
62 which payment is made to an approved program provider under
63 this section, including earned units of high school credit,
64 attainment of an employability skills certificate,
65 attainment of an industry-recognized credential, and
66 attainment of an accredited high school diploma;

67 (18) "Program", the workforce diploma program
68 established in this section;

69 (19) "Student", a participant in the program
70 established in this section who is twenty-one years of age
71 or older, who is a resident of Missouri, and who has not yet
72 earned a high school diploma;

73 (20) "Transcript evaluation", a documented summary of
74 credits earned in previous public or private accredited high
75 schools compared with the program and approved program
76 provider graduation requirements;

77 (21) "Unit of high school credit", credit awarded
78 based on a student's demonstration that the student has
79 successfully met the content expectations for the credit
80 area as defined by subject area standards, expectations, or
81 guidelines.

82 2. There is hereby established the "Workforce Diploma
83 Program" within the department of higher education and
84 workforce development to assist students with obtaining a
85 high school diploma and developing employability and career
86 technical skills. The program may be delivered in campus-
87 based, blended, or online modalities.

88 3. (1) Before August 16, 2023, and annually
89 thereafter, the department shall issue a request for
90 applications for interested program providers to become
91 approved program providers and participate in the program.
92 Applications shall include evidence that such interested
93 program provider meets the qualifications set forth in
94 subdivision (2) of this subsection.

95 (2) Each approved program provider shall:

96 (a) Be an accredited high school diploma-granting
97 entity;

98 (b) Have a minimum of two years of experience
99 providing adult dropout recovery services;

100 (c) Have the ability to provide academic skill intake
101 assessments and transcript evaluations. Such academic skill
102 intake assessments may be administered in person or online;

103 (d) Have the ability to develop a learning plan for
104 each student that integrates graduation requirements and
105 career goals;

106 (e) Provide a course catalog that includes all courses
107 necessary to meet graduation requirements;

108 (f) Have the ability to provide remediation
109 opportunities in literacy and numeracy;

110 (g) Have the ability to provide employability skills
111 certification;

112 (h) Have the ability to provide career pathways
113 coursework;

114 (i) Have the ability to provide preparation for
115 industry-recognized credentials; and

116 (j) Have the ability to provide career placement
117 services.

118 (3) Upon confirmation by the department that an
119 applicant meets all of the qualifications listed in
120 subdivision (2) of this subsection, an applicant shall
121 become an approved program provider.

122 4. (1) The department shall announce the approved
123 program providers before October sixteenth annually, with
124 authorization for the approved program providers to begin
125 enrolling students starting before November fifteenth
126 annually.

127 (2) Approved program providers shall maintain their
128 approval without reapplying annually if the approved program
129 provider has not been removed from the approved program
130 provider list under this section.

131 5. (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this
132 subsection, the department shall pay approved program
133 providers for the completion of the following milestones by
134 each student:

135 (a) Two hundred fifty dollars for the completion of
136 each half unit of high school credit;

137 (b) Two hundred fifty dollars for attaining an
138 employability skills certification;

139 (c) Two hundred fifty dollars for attaining an
140 industry-recognized credential requiring no more than fifty
141 hours of training;

142 (d) Five hundred dollars for attaining an industry-
143 recognized credential requiring at least fifty-one but no
144 more than one hundred hours of training;

145 (e) Seven hundred fifty dollars for attaining an
146 industry-recognized credential requiring more than one
147 hundred hours of training;

148 (f) One thousand dollars for attaining an accredited
149 high school diploma.

150 (2) No approved program provider shall receive funding
151 for a student under this section if the approved program
152 provider receives federal or state funding or private
153 tuition for that student.

154 6. (1) Approved program providers shall submit
155 monthly invoices to the department before the eleventh
156 calendar day of each month for milestones met in the
157 previous calendar month.

158 (2) The department shall pay approved program
159 providers in the order in which invoices are submitted until
160 all available funds are exhausted.

161 (3) The department shall provide a written update to
162 approved program providers by the last calendar day of each
163 month. The update shall include the aggregate total dollars
164 that have been paid to approved program providers to date
165 and the estimated number of enrollments still available for
166 the program year.

167 7. Before July sixteenth of each year, each provider
168 shall report the following metrics to the department:

169 (1) The total number of students who have been funded
170 through the program;

171 (2) The total number of credits earned;

172 (3) The total number of employability skills
173 certifications issued;

174 (4) The total number of industry-recognized
175 credentials earned for each tier of funding; and

176 (5) The total number of graduates.

177 8. (1) Upon the end of the second fiscal year of the
178 program, the department shall review data from each approved
179 program provider to ensure that each is achieving minimum
180 program performance standards, including:

181 (a) A minimum of a fifty percent graduation rate;

182 (b) A cost per graduate of seven thousand dollars or
183 less.

184 (2) Any approved program provider that fails to meet
185 the minimum program performance standards described in
186 subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be placed on
187 probationary status for the remainder of the fiscal year by
188 the department.

189 (3) Any approved program provider that fails to meet
190 the minimum program performance standards described in
191 subdivision (1) of this subsection for two consecutive years
192 shall be removed from the approved provider list by the
193 department.

194 9. Any diploma issued under this section shall be
195 recognized as a secondary school diploma by the state.

196 10. The director of the department may promulgate all
197 necessary rules and regulations for the administration of
198 this section. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term
199 is defined in section 536.010, that is created under the
200 authority delegated in this section shall become effective
201 only if it complies with and is subject to all of the
202 provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section
203 536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable, and
204 if any of the powers vested with the general assembly
205 pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective
206 date, or to disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently
207 held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking

208 authority and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28,
209 2022, shall be invalid and void.

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