

SENATE BILL No. 199

AN ACT concerning education; relating to Kansas high school equivalency credentials; establishing the AO-K to work program.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

Section 1. (a) There is hereby established the AO-K to work program. The provisions of this program shall apply to all adult education programs in the state.

(b) As used in this section:

(1) "AO-K" or "accelerating opportunity: Kansas" means a career pathways program model that assists students in obtaining a high school equivalency, becoming ready for transferable college-level courses and earning an industry credential.

(2) "Career readiness assessment" means an assessment approved by the state board of regents to measure foundational skills required for success in the workplace and workplace skills that affect job performance.

(3) "Career readiness certificate" means a certificate that uses a career readiness assessment approved by the state board of regents to document an individual's skills in applied math, graphic literacy and workplace documents.

(4) "Community college" means a community college as defined in K.S.A. 71-701, and amendments thereto.

(5) "Industry recognized credential" means a credential recognized by multiple employers across an industry as determined by the state board of regents.

(6) "Kansas adult education program" means any educational institution or approved agency that receives adult education funding through the state board of regents; provides adult education or English language acquisition programs; serves Kansas adults aged 16 and over who are in need of basic skills for the workforce, community participation and family life; and prepares adults for achieving industry recognized credentials and college certificates and degrees.

(7) "Qualified student" means an individual who has:

(A) Attained the age of 21;

(B) not been awarded a high school diploma;

(C) been accepted into a Kansas adult education program;

(D) demonstrated high school equivalency by meeting the criteria established by the state board of regents pursuant to this section; and

(E) declared an AO-K career pathway interest.

(8) "Technical college" means a technical college as such term is defined in K.S.A. 71-1802, and amendments thereto.

(c) (1) The state board of regents shall award a Kansas high school equivalency credential to any qualified student who:

(A) Is recommended and approved to participate in a AO-K career pathway approved by the state board of regents for college credit;

(B) successfully completes an approved AO-K career pathway and receives the industry-recognized credential appropriate to the completed pathway;

(C) takes a career readiness assessment and earns a career readiness certificate at a level approved by the state board of regents; and

(D) satisfies any other requirements deemed necessary by the state board of regents.

(d) While participating in the AO-K to work program, qualified students shall be provided reasonable access to all available student resources of the adult education program, the participating technical or community college and the appropriate community partners, including, but not limited to, appropriate academic support, barrier mitigation and employment or career assistance.

(e) Each application to the state board of regents for issuance or duplication of a Kansas high school equivalency credential shall be accompanied by a fee, which shall be established by the state board of regents in an amount of not more than \$25. On or before June 1 of each

year, the state board of regents shall determine the amount of revenue that will be required to properly administer the provisions of this section during the next ensuing fiscal year and shall establish the Kansas high school equivalency credentials processing fee for such year in the amount deemed necessary for such purposes. Such fee shall become effective on the succeeding July 1 of each year. The state board of regents shall remit all moneys received by or for it from Kansas high school equivalency credentials processing fees to the state treasurer in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 75-4215, and amendments thereto. Upon receipt of each such remittance, the state treasurer shall deposit the entire amount in the state treasury to the credit of the Kansas high school equivalency credential processing fees fund, which fund is hereby established in the state treasury, and shall be used only for the payment of expenses connected with the processing, issuance, or duplication of Kansas high school equivalency credentials, and for the keeping of records by the state board of regents. All expenditures from the Kansas high school equivalency credential processing fees fund shall be made in accordance with appropriation acts upon warrants of the director of accounts and reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by the state board of regents or by a person or persons designated by the state board.

(f) The state board of regents may adopt rules and regulations to implement and administer the provisions of this act.

Sec. 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.

I hereby certify that the above BILL originated in the SENATE, and passed that body

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*

Passed the HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

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*Speaker of the House.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chief Clerk of the House.*

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Governor.*