

*As Amended by Senate Committee*

*Session of 2024*

**SENATE BILL No. 438**

By Committee on Education

2-1

AN ACT concerning postsecondary education; relating to the AO-K program; eliminating the requirement to subtract other aid from the state payment; amending K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 74-32,267 and repealing the existing section.

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

Section 1. K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 74-32,267 is hereby amended to read as follows: 74-32,267. (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 years of age;

- 1 (B) not been awarded a high school diploma;  
2 (C) been accepted into a Kansas adult education program;  
3 (D) demonstrated high school equivalency by meeting the criteria  
4 established by the state board of regents pursuant to this section; and  
5 (E) declared an AO-K career pathway interest.
- 6 (8) "Technical college" means a technical college ~~as such term is~~  
7 defined in K.S.A. 71-1802, and amendments thereto.
- 8 (c) The state board of regents shall award a Kansas high school  
9 equivalency credential to any qualified student who:
- 10 (1) Is recommended and approved to participate in a AO-K career  
11 pathway approved by the state board of regents for college credit;  
12 (2) successfully completes an approved AO-K career pathway and  
13 receives the industry-recognized credential appropriate to the completed  
14 pathway;  
15 (3) takes a career readiness assessment and earns a career readiness  
16 certificate at a level approved by the state board of regents; and  
17 (4) satisfies any other requirements deemed necessary by the state  
18 board of regents.
- 19 (d) ~~(1) While participating in the~~ *enrolled in an* AO-K ~~to work~~  
20 ~~program, qualified~~ *all* students shall be provided reasonable access to all  
21 available student resources of the adult education program, the  
22 participating technical or community college and the appropriate  
23 community partners, including, but not limited to, appropriate academic  
24 support, barrier mitigation, employment or career assistance, books, tools  
25 and personal materials required to participate in an AO-K career pathway  
26 program and industry examinations.
- 27 (2) Subject to appropriations, ~~financial assistance~~ *the amount of a*  
28 *state payment* for books, tools, personal materials and industry  
29 examinations shall be the aggregate amount of the cost of books, tools,  
30 personal materials and industry examinations for the career pathway  
31 program at the technical college or community college where such student  
32 is enrolled and receiving assistance ~~minus the aggregate amount of all~~  
33 ~~other aid awarded to such student.~~ The amount of ~~financial assistance~~ *such*  
34 *payment* provided for each student shall not exceed \$500 *over the lifetime*  
35 *of the student.*
- 36 (e) Each application to the state board of regents for issuance or  
37 duplication of a Kansas high school equivalency credential shall be  
38 accompanied by a fee established by the state board of regents in an  
39 amount of not more than \$25. On or before June 1 of each year, the state  
40 board of regents shall determine the amount of revenue required to  
41 properly administer the provisions of this section during the next ensuing  
42 fiscal year and shall establish the Kansas high school equivalency  
43 credentials processing fee for such year in the amount deemed necessary

1 for such purposes. Such fee shall become effective on the succeeding July  
2 1 of each year. The state board of regents shall remit all moneys received  
3 by or for it from Kansas high school equivalency credentials processing  
4 fees to the state treasurer in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 75-  
5 4215, and amendments thereto. Upon receipt of each such remittance, the  
6 state treasurer shall deposit the entire amount in the state treasury to the  
7 credit of the Kansas high school equivalency credential processing fees  
8 fund, which fund is hereby established in the state treasury; and shall be  
9 used only for the payment of expenses connected with the processing,  
10 issuance; or duplication of Kansas high school equivalency credentials;  
11 and ~~for the~~ keeping of records by the state board of regents. All  
12 expenditures from the Kansas high school equivalency credential  
13 processing fees fund shall be made in accordance with appropriation acts  
14 upon warrants of the director of accounts and reports issued pursuant to  
15 vouchers approved by the state board of regents or by a person or persons  
16 designated by the state board.

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

19 Sec. 2. K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 74-32,267 is hereby repealed.

20 Sec. 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its  
21 publication in the statute book.