

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 59th Legislature (2024)

3 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
4 FOR ENGROSSED
5 HOUSE BILL NO. 1425

By: Vancuren and Pittman of the
House

and

Rader and Stanley of the
Senate

8
9 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

10 An Act relating to schools; defining term; directing
11 each school district board of education to adopt
12 certain policy excusing a student to attend certain
13 course; providing requirements for student to attend
14 certain course; providing certain immunity from
15 liability; exempting instructors of certain course
16 from licensure or certification; directing students
17 to be considered in attendance with a school district
18 while attending certain course; providing for the
19 award of elective credit for completion of certain
20 course; providing for evaluation of certain course;
21 providing exemption for certain charter schools and
22 virtual charter schools; providing for codification;
23 providing an effective date; and declaring an
24 emergency.

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

1 attend a course in religious or moral instruction taught by an
2 independent entity off school property.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 F. A school district board of education shall award a student
22 credit for work completed in a released time course that is
23 substantiated by a transcript from the independent entity providing
24 the course. A student shall be awarded elective credit for the

1 completion of each released time course. To determine whether
2 elective credit may be awarded as provided for in this subsection,
3 the board of education shall evaluate the course in a neutral and
4 secular manner that does not involve any test for religious content
5 or denominational affiliation. For purposes of this subsection, the
6 secular criteria used to evaluate a released time course may
7 include:

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

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

18 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2024.

19 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
20 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
21 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
22 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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