

1 **SENATE FLOOR VERSION**

2 April 2, 2024

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

By: Vancuren and Pittman of the
House

and

Rader, Stanley, and Bullard
of the Senate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 1. The amount of classroom instruction time;

16 2. The course syllabus, which reflects the course requirements
17 and any materials used in the course;

18 3. Methods of assessment used in the course; and

19 4. The qualifications of the course instructor.

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

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

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

6 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
7 April 2, 2024 - DO PASS AS AMENDED BY CS
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