

CHAPTER 197

(HB 826)

AN ACT relating to education.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 151B IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

No less than eighty-five percent (85%) of general fund moneys appropriated by the General Assembly to the Office of Adult Education shall be used for programs to fulfill the adult education mission and goals enumerated in KRS 151B.402, 151B.403, 151B.406, and 151B.408. The Office of Adult Education may utilize any remaining general fund moneys for administrative operations.

➔Section 2. KRS 151B.403 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) The Office of Adult Education within the Department of Workforce Development in the Education and Labor Cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations to establish programs aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, or any other similar standards adopted by the federal Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, which upon successful completion, shall result in the issuance of a High School Equivalency Diploma.
- (2) (a) At least one (1) program authorized under subsection (1) of this section shall include a test aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, or any other standards adopted by the federal Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, to serve as a qualifying test, which upon passing, shall entitle students to receive a High School Equivalency Diploma.
(b) *A qualifying test meeting the requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection shall provide an option for students to be administered a written or paper test in lieu of an electronic administration.*
- (3) For purposes of any public employment, a High School Equivalency Diploma shall be considered equal to a high school diploma issued under the provisions of KRS 158.140.
- (4) A High School Equivalency Diploma shall be issued without charge upon successfully completing a High School Equivalency Diploma program. A fee may be assessed by the Office of Adult Education for the issuance of a duplicate High School Equivalency Diploma and for issuance of a duplicate score report. All fees collected for duplicate diplomas and score reports shall be used to support the adult education program.
- (5) The Office of Adult Education is authorized to contract annually with an institution of higher education or other appropriate agency or entity for scoring High School Equivalency Diploma program examinations.
- (6) On June 29, 2017, any high school equivalency diploma or external diploma previously recognized or issued by the Commonwealth shall be considered retroactively as a High School Equivalency Diploma.
- (7) Upon issuance, a High School Equivalency Diploma shall not be invalidated by any subsequent changes in test selection under this section.

➔Section 3. 2026 RS SB 4/VO, Section 15, is hereby repealed. The reviser of statutes shall not codify the provisions of Section 15 of 2026 RS SB 4/VO, and they shall have no legal effect.

➔Section 4. 2026 RS SB 4/VO, Section 16, is amended to read as follows:

The ~~McConnell Center at the University of Louisville and the~~ Center of American Civics at the University of Kentucky shall develop materials and curricula for a degree program that meets the requirements of this section and distribute the materials and curricula developed to each public institution of higher education in this state. The curricula shall be for a course of instruction that is three (3) semester hours, or the equivalent, in American government or American history that provides a comprehensive overview of the major events and turning points of American history and government and, at a minimum, includes:

- (1) An understanding of the United States Constitution in its entirety;
- (2) An understanding of the Declaration of Independence in its entirety;
- (3) An understanding of a minimum of five (5) essays from the Federalist Papers in their entirety as selected by the course instructor;

- (4) An understanding of the Emancipation Proclamation in its entirety;
- (5) An understanding of the Gettysburg Address in its entirety; and
- (6) Other documents foundational to the American Civil Rights movement.

Signed by Governor April 23, 2026.