



101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2019 and 2020

SB3614

Introduced 2/14/2020, by Sen. Scott M. Bennett

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Workforce Diploma Pilot Program Act. Creates the Workforce Diploma Pilot Program to provide performance payments to approved program providers for eligible students enrolled in an approved program provider's program. Provides criteria and other requirements for the selection of approved program providers. Allows the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, subject to appropriation, to disburse payments to approved program providers in amounts, to be specified by the Department by rule, for each eligible student's completion or attainment of specified academic outcomes. Requires approved program providers to submit invoices on an ongoing basis to the Department for payments for student completion or attainment of specified goals. Requires the Department to review data from each approved program provider to ensure the programs offered by each provider are meeting minimum Program performance standards. Provides for the adoption of rules. Provides Program reporting requirements. Repeals the Act on July 1, 2023. Provides a legislative declaration. Defines terms. Effective July 1, 2020.

LRB101 19995 RJF 69521 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning the Workforce Diploma Pilot Program.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Workforce Diploma Pilot Program Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative declaration. The General Assembly
7 finds and declares that:

8 (1) In Illinois, nearly 13% of adults do not have a high
9 school diploma.

10 (2) Research shows that as many as 80% of the individuals
11 who left high school without a diploma did so for nonacademic
12 reasons, including the need to work to support themselves or
13 their families, becoming parents, bullying or social anxiety,
14 or falling too far behind to graduate on time.

15 (3) Education is a significant economic driver, with
16 significant costs to the State in social services,
17 incarceration expenses, and lost income from taxes
18 attributable to students who drop out of high school.

19 (4) When combined with lost wages, the average lifetime
20 total opportunity cost for one high school dropout is \$755,900.

21 (5) Therefore, the General Assembly declares that by
22 creating a Workforce Diploma Pilot Program that provides
23 Illinois adults with the opportunity to complete a high school

1 diploma, while transferring the risk to providers who receive
2 performance payments only when those students meet performance
3 milestones, the State can better meet its workforce goals for
4 future economic growth.

5 Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act:

6 "Academic skill intake assessment" means a
7 criteria-referenced assessment of numeracy and literacy skill
8 with high reliability and validity as determined by third party
9 research, whether administered in person or online.

10 "Accredited" means holding an active accreditation from
11 one of the 7 United States regional accreditors recognized by
12 the United States Department of Education, including the Middle
13 States Commission on Higher Education, the New England
14 Association of Schools and Colleges, the Higher Learning
15 Commission, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and
16 Universities, the Southern Association of Colleges and
17 Schools, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the
18 Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, as
19 well as any successor entities or consolidations of the above,
20 including AdvancEd/Cognia.

21 "Adult dropout recovery services" includes, but is not
22 limited to, sourcing, recruitment, and engagement of eligible
23 students, learning plan development, active teaching, and
24 proactive coaching and mentoring, resulting in an accredited
25 high school diploma.

1 "Approved program provider" means a public, non-profit, or
2 other entity that meets the requirements of this Act. An
3 approved program provider may not receive funding for a student
4 if the approved program provider receives federal or State
5 funding or private tuition for that student.

6 "Coaching" means proactive communication between the
7 approved program provider and the student related to the
8 student's pace and progress through his or her learning plan.

9 "Career pathways coursework" means one or more courses that
10 align with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the
11 State or region that helps an individual enter or advance
12 within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

13 "Career placement services" means services designed to
14 assist students in obtaining employment, including career
15 interest self-assessments, job search skills, resume
16 development, and mock interviews.

17 "Cost per graduate" means total Program funding reimbursed
18 to a provider divided by total graduates for a cohort year.

19 "Department" means the Department of Commerce and Economic
20 Opportunity.

21 "Eligible student" or "student" means a participant in the
22 Workforce Diploma Pilot Program who is 19 years of age or
23 older, who is a resident of Illinois, and who has not yet
24 earned a high school diploma.

25 "Employability skills certification" means a certificate
26 earned by demonstrating professional non-technical skills

1 through assessment, portfolio, or observation.

2 "Graduate" means a student who has successfully completed
3 all of the provider requirements in order to obtain a high
4 school diploma.

5 "Graduation rate" means the total graduates for the fiscal
6 year divided by all students for the fiscal year for whom the
7 provider has received funding, calculated one fiscal year in
8 arrears.

9 "Graduation guidelines" means course and credit
10 requirements for a student to receive the approved program
11 provider's high school diploma.

12 "High school diploma" means a diploma issued by an
13 accredited institution. A diploma issued under this Act is
14 recognized as a high school diploma by the State.

15 "Industry-recognized credential" means an
16 education-related or work-related credential that verifies an
17 individual's qualification or competence issued by a third
18 party with the relevant authority to issue such credentials.

19 "Learning plan" means a documented plan for courses and
20 credits needed for each individual in order to complete Program
21 and provider graduation requirements.

22 "Mentoring" means a direct relationship between a coach and
23 a student to facilitate the completion of the student's
24 learning plan designed to prepare the student to succeed in the
25 Program and his or her future endeavors.

26 "Milestones" means objective measures of progress for

1 which payment is made to an approved program provider under
2 this Act, including earned units of high school credit,
3 attainment of an employability skills certificate, attainment
4 of an industry-recognized credential, and attainment of an
5 accredited high school diploma.

6 "Program" means the Workforce Diploma Pilot Program
7 created under this Act.

8 "Request for qualifications" means a request for
9 interested potential program providers to submit evidence that
10 they meet the qualifications established in this Act, all of
11 which once confirmed by the Department that they meet the
12 qualifications become approved program providers. A request
13 for qualifications may be left open with approved program
14 providers approved to operate programs at any time of year.

15 "Transcript evaluations" means a documented summary of
16 credits earned in previous public or private accredited high
17 schools compared with Program and approved program provider
18 graduation guidelines.

19 "Units of high school credit" means credit awarded based on
20 a student's demonstration that he or she has successfully met
21 the content expectations for the credit area as defined by
22 subject area standards, expectations, or guidelines.

23 Section 15. Workforce Diploma Pilot Program.

24 (a) There is created in the Department of Commerce and
25 Economic Opportunity the Workforce Diploma Pilot Program to

1 provide performance payments to approved program providers for
2 eligible students enrolled in an approved program provider's
3 program.

4 (b) On or before August 15 in any fiscal year in which the
5 General Assembly appropriates money for the Program, the
6 Department shall issue a request for qualifications for
7 providers to participate in the Program as approved program
8 providers.

9 (c) The criteria necessary to be an approved program
10 provider includes the following:

11 (1) experience providing adult dropout recovery
12 services;

13 (2) the ability to provide academic skill intake
14 assessment and transcript evaluations;

15 (3) the ability to develop a learning plan that
16 integrates academic requirements and career goals;

17 (4) the ability to provide all instruction necessary to
18 meet or exceed the State Board of Education's high school
19 graduation guidelines to achieve a high school diploma;

20 (5) the ability to provide remedial course work in
21 literacy and numeracy;

22 (6) the ability to provide a research-validated
23 academic resiliency assessment and intervention;

24 (7) the ability to provide employability skills
25 development aligned to employer needs;

26 (8) the ability to provide career pathways course work;

1 (9) the ability to provide preparation for
2 industry-recognized credentials;

3 (10) the ability to provide career placement services;
4 and

5 (11) high school diploma accreditation by a recognized
6 regional accrediting body or a consolidation of one or more
7 regional accrediting bodies.

8 (d) The Department shall review qualifications from
9 approved program providers to determine whether the provider
10 meets the criteria to be an approved program provider under the
11 Program. Within 60 days after submission of qualifications
12 under this Section, the Department shall publish a list of
13 providers that meet the criteria for an approved program
14 provider. An approved program provider is eligible for Program
15 payments for outcomes, as provided under subsection (e),
16 achieved 30 or more days after the Department publishes the
17 list of approved program providers.

18 Once the Department determines that a provider is an
19 approved program provider under the Program, the provider
20 remains an approved program provider without the need to
21 reapply annually, unless the provider is removed by the
22 Department from the list of approved program providers as
23 provided under subsection (g).

24 (e) In any fiscal year in which the General Assembly
25 appropriates money for the Program, the Department shall
26 disburse payments to approved program providers in amounts, to

1 be specified by the Department by rule, for each eligible
2 student's completion or attainment of the following outcomes:

3 (1) for completion of each half-credit;

4 (2) for completion of an accredited high school
5 diploma;

6 (3) for completion of an employability skills
7 certification program equal to at least one carnegie unit;

8 (4) for attainment of an industry-recognized
9 credential requiring up to 50 hours of training;

10 (5) for attainment of an industry-recognized
11 credential requiring between 51 and 100 hours of training;
12 and

13 (6) for attainment of an industry-recognized
14 credential requiring more than 100 hours of training.

15 An approved program provider that receives tuition or other
16 payment from or on behalf of an eligible student shall not also
17 receive a payment from the Program on behalf of the eligible
18 student for the same course or program.

19 (f) Approved program providers shall submit invoices on an
20 ongoing basis to the Department for payments for student
21 completion or attainment of goals set forth in subsection (e).
22 The Department shall determine the submission dates for the
23 invoices. Subject to available appropriations, approved
24 program providers who submit invoices on or before the dates
25 determined by the Department shall receive payments. If
26 available appropriations are insufficient to satisfy all

1 invoices received by the submission date, the Department shall
2 reduce all payments by the same percentage until the money is
3 exhausted.

4 The Department shall publish monthly reports for approved
5 program providers indicating the total amount of payments
6 disbursed pursuant to the Program and the total number of
7 students enrolled in the Program.

8 (g) The Department shall review data from each approved
9 program provider to ensure the programs offered by each
10 provider are meeting minimum Program performance standards,
11 including a minimum 50% high school graduation rate from the
12 approved program provider's programs, calculated one year in
13 arrears. The Department shall place an approved program
14 provider that does not meet the Program performance standards
15 established in this Section on probationary status for the
16 remainder of the State fiscal year. The Department shall remove
17 an approved program provider from the list of approved program
18 providers if the provider does not meet the performance
19 standards for 2 consecutive years.

20 (h) The Department may adopt rules necessary to implement
21 and administer the Program created under this Act.

22 Section 20. Program reporting.

23 (a) On or before August 15 of each year in which Program
24 payments were disbursed for the prior State fiscal year, each
25 approved program provider that received payments under the

1 Program for the preceding State fiscal year shall report the
2 following information to the Department:

3 (1) the total number of eligible students for whom the
4 approved program provider has received payments;

5 (2) the total number of units of high school credit
6 earned by eligible students for whom the approved program
7 provider is receiving payments;

8 (3) the total number of employability skills
9 certifications issued to eligible students for whom the
10 approved program provider is receiving payments;

11 (4) the total number of industry-recognized
12 credentials earned for each tier of funding described in
13 subsection (e) of Section 15 by eligible students for whom
14 the approved program provider is receiving payments; and

15 (5) the total number of eligible students for whom the
16 approved program provider is receiving payments who
17 receive high school diplomas.

18 (b) On or before October 15 of each year in which Program
19 payments were disbursed for the prior State fiscal year, the
20 Department shall submit to the General Assembly a report
21 listing approved program providers and summarizing the
22 information received from approved program providers under
23 subsection (a), and other workforce and postsecondary
24 outcomes, including employment and college enrollment.

25 Section 25. Repeal. This Act is repealed on July 1, 2023.

1 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,
2 2020.