



Arkansas House Newsletter

July 26, 2019

Back to School



Most students in Arkansas public schools head back to the classroom the second week of August. From recess to reading, there are several pieces of legislation passed in the most recent session which will impact the upcoming school year.

Below are some, but not all, of the acts taking effect this year.

Act 641 ensures that elementary schools provide 40 minutes of recess for students.

Act 190 states a school counselor shall spend at least ninety percent (90%) of his or her working time providing direct and indirect services to students.

Act 629 allows school districts to hire certified law enforcement officers as school resource officers.

Act 1029 requires parents of the victim of bullying be notified as soon as reasonably practicable. It requires schools to write a report on the complaint within 5 school days. The bill also requires the school to notify the guardian of the student who is determined to have been the perpetrator of the bullying.

Act 288 makes it a primary offense to use a handheld wireless device in a school zone.

Act 166 raises the maximum penalty for passing a stopped school bus from \$500 to \$2,000.

Act 530 makes it a Class A misdemeanor if a mandated reporter fails to notify law enforcement of a serious threat made by an individual regarding violence in or targeted at a school.

Act 640 amends school discipline procedures, repealing mandatory expulsion from school for possession of weapons.

Act 428 makes it against the law for students to be shamed or stigmatized for not paying for lunch. It prohibits schools from providing a different meal or snack than other students or requiring the student to dispose of the meal.

Act 602 allows school districts to develop policies for distribution of excess food.

Act 83 enhances the Right to Read Act. This bill would require public schools and open-enrollment public charter schools to include a literacy plan in their annual school-level improvement plan. The plan would have to include curriculum and professional development aligned with the literacy needs of that school and based on the Science of Reading initiative.

Act 466 allows high school students to earn credit for the required family finance course starting in ninth grade.

Act 245 requires that bleeding control training be taught as part of high school health courses.

We would also like to remind families that Act 757 of 2011 provides for a sales tax holiday in Arkansas during the first weekend of August each year. This year's holiday will begin at 12:01 am on Saturday, August 3 and end at 11:59 pm on Sunday, August 4.

[Click here for FAQ about the Sales Tax Holiday.](#)