HB373

PYJ3EGR-1

By Representatives Lawrence, Gray, Moore (P), Wood (D), Lovvorn, Garrett

RFD: Education Policy

First Read: 21-Mar-24

SYNOPSIS:

This bill would establish the Alabama Workforce Pathways Act.

This bill would provide different pathways towards earning a high school diploma based on the further workforce or continuing education plans of the student.

This bill would provide, subject to funding, for the upgrade or additional construction of career and technical education centers throughout the state.

This bill would also provide, subject to funding, for the Alabama Short-Term Credential Program to provide additional scholarships for the training of individuals through the Alabama Community College System.

A BILL

TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To establish the Alabama Workforce Pathways Act; to provide different pathways for earning a high school diploma based on future career paths; to require the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education to develop a

curriculum for earning a Workforce Pathways diploma; to provide, subject to funding, for the refurbishing and construction of new career and technical education centers or K-12 students; and to also provide, subject to funding, for the Alabama Short-Term Credential Program to provide additional scholarships for training through the Alabama Community College System.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. (a) This act shall be known and may be cited as the Alabama Workforce Pathways Act.

(b) The purpose of this act is to provide enhanced academic and skilled trades opportunities for Alabama students, and to facilitate the development of a career pathways diploma at the K-12 level that would enhance career and technical education opportunities for high school students who plan to enter the workforce immediately after graduation.

(c) The Legislature finds and declares that high school students need more than one pathway to earn a high school diploma in this state.

Section 2. (a) The State Board of Education shall establish a new Workforce Pathways diploma at the K-12 level.

(b) Following the establishment of the Workforce Pathways diploma, the State Department of Education shall develop the curriculum for this program within 120 days after its approval by the State Board of Education.

(c) All K-12 students in this state shall earn the same high school diploma, regardless of which diploma pathway they follow; however, students enrolled in the Workforce Pathways

diploma pathway shall only be required to complete two math credits and two science credits to earn their high school diploma instead of the four math and four science credits required of other students.

(d) In lieu of the math and science credits, students who do not plan to attend a postsecondary educational institution after high school may earn credits that apply toward graduation by completing career and technical education courses, which help prepare those students to go directly into employment in their chosen field following high school graduation.

(e) The State Department of Education shall work with local boards of education throughout the state to implement the Workforce Pathways diploma pathway at the local level.

Section 3. The State Board of Education may seek additional funding from the Legislature to construct, retrofit, or upgrade career and technical education centers throughout the state so that a career and technical education center is located within a reasonable distance from every high school in the state. While school systems with a larger population of students may need their own career and technical education center, school systems with smaller populations of students may share career and technical education centers.

Section 4. The Legislature may provide additional funding for the Alabama Short-Term Credential Program that provides scholarships to facilitate the participation of individuals in for credit and non-credit courses provided through the Alabama Community College System offering training

for in-demand careers in the region where the course is taught.

Section 5. This act shall become effective October 1, 2024.