

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.
Act 229 of the Regular Session

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

As Engrossed: H1/28/25 H2/17/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1117

By: Representatives R. Scott Richardson, Andrews, Duffield, Perry, Rye

By: Senator J. Bryant

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AND THE ARKANSAS STATE GAME AND FISH COMMISSION TO DETERMINE THE EARLIEST GRADE IN WHICH IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR STUDENTS TO RECEIVE INSTRUCTION ON FIREARM SAFETY; TO REQUIRE A PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AND AN OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL TO ANNUALLY PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH INSTRUCTION ON FIREARM SAFETY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF INSTRUCTION ON FIREARM SAFETY IN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 16, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-16-163. Instruction on firearm safety – Required.

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly to:

(1) Protect Arkansas children from the accidental discharge of firearms by providing age-appropriate firearm education and instruction; and

(2) Empower the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission to work with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to create and approve age-appropriate firearm safety courses.

(b)(1) The division, in consultation with the commission, shall



determine the earliest grade in which it is appropriate for students enrolled in public school districts and open-enrollment public charter schools to begin receiving instruction on firearm safety.

(2) In order to make the determination required under subdivision (a)(1) of this section, the division and the commission shall study relevant data and risk factors, including without limitation the earliest age at which:

(A) Incidents of injury involving firearms are reported;
and

(B) Children are susceptible to harm from unsecured firearms that they are able to gain access to.

(c) Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, each public school district and open-enrollment public charter school shall annually provide students with age-appropriate and grade-appropriate instruction on firearm safety.

(d) The curriculum or program of instruction used to educate students on firearm safety under subsection (b) of this section shall:

(1) Be approved by the division;

(2) Begin in the earliest appropriate grade as determined by the division and the commission under subsection (a) of this section and continue in each subsequent grade through grade twelve (12);

(3) Include instruction on the following without limitation:

(A) The steps to take if a student finds an unsecured firearm, including without limitation the importance of:

(i) Avoiding injury if the student finds an unsecured firearm;

(ii) Never touching a firearm if the student finds an unsecured firearm; and

(iii) Immediately notifying an adult of the location of the unsecured firearm;

(B) School safety relating to firearms; and

(C) The proper handling and safe storage of firearms;

and

(4) Include neutral viewpoints on all included topics, including without limitation the prevention of accidental firearm injury.

(e)(1) The division shall not approve a curriculum or program of instruction used to educate students on firearm safety if the curriculum, program of instruction, or any of the instructional materials used as part of the curriculum or program of instruction bear a brand or stated organizational affiliation.

(2) However, curricula, programs of instruction, or any of the instructional materials used as part of the curricula or programs of instruction used to educate students on firearm safety may bear a brand issued by the State of Arkansas or any of its departments, agencies, or divisions.

(f) The division shall use the following preferred methods of instruction in determining the curriculum or program of instruction used to educate students on firearm safety:

(1) The viewing of a video produced by the commission or a commission-approved source;

(2) The review of online resources and materials; and

(3)(A) An alternative curriculum, which may include an off-campus, commission-approved firearm safety course.

(B)(i) An off-campus, commission-approved firearm safety course may be provided in conjunction with a live-fire exercise or sporting event.

(ii) If an off-campus, commission-approved firearm safety course is provided in conjunction with a live-fire exercise or sporting event, the provider of the off-campus, commission-approved firearm safety course and the public school district or open-enrollment public charter school in which the participating student is enrolled shall obtain prior written approval from the participating student's parent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis to the participating student.

(g) As used in this section, "firearm" means the same as defined in § 5-1-102.

/s/R. Scott Richardson

APPROVED: 3/4/25