

Legislative Analysis



NO DUAL ENROLLMENT FOR 5TH YEAR STUDENTS

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House Bills 4143 and 4144 as introduced

Sponsor: Rep. John Moolenaar

1st Committee: Education

2nd Committee: Higher Education and Career Preparation

First Analysis (3-23-05)

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bills would prohibit fifth year high school students from participating in programs reimbursed under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act and the Career Technical Preparation Act, respectively.

FISCAL IMPACT: House Bills 4143 and 4144 would prevent fifth year high school students from participating in dual enrollment. However, those students would still be eligible to attend high school to finish their courses to obtain a high school diploma. This legislation would most likely result in the students being counted as a partial FTE, saving the state a portion of the student's foundation allowance and providing a small savings to the school aid fund.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Michigan is one of more than 30 states with established dual enrollment programs. Dual enrollment programs allow high school students to take college level courses and receive credit at both institutions toward the completion of a college degree. Dual enrollment, while dating back to the 1970s, did not begin to gain popularity until the mid-1980s. At that time, states established the programs in an attempt to ensure that gifted or other qualified students would have access to college courses while still enrolled in high school.

While the purpose of dual enrollment is similar in most states, the rules and regulations that govern the programs vary significantly. Most states codify basic requirements for participating, while others, like Michigan, require a placement exam to determine eligibility. Funding for the programs also varies among the states. Most states, like Michigan, have mandated funding sources, and they also determine who pays—although the sources of payment vary. For example, in Arkansas and others, students are solely responsible for covering costs; in Colorado and others, students are reimbursed upon successful completion of a course; in Georgia, eligible programs are paid through a state funded grant program; in Texas, junior colleges are allowed to waive tuition; and in Wisconsin, as in Michigan, local school districts pay the costs. See [Background Information](#) below.

In Michigan, students may be dually enrolled in a college or university, or in a technical program. Section 21b of the School Aid Act allows a student's foundation grant to be used for tuition and fees, if the student is attending a postsecondary institution or a career

and technical preparation program. Credit earned in post-secondary programs can be used as high school credit, postsecondary credit, or both.

Under the Revised School Code, students are eligible for a fifth year of high school if they have not met the graduation requirements to obtain a high school diploma. Further, a fifth-year student is eligible to participate in dual enrollment programs—that is, to enroll both in high school and in certain post-secondary education institutions.

Two statutes govern Michigan's dual enrollment programs: The Career and Technical Preparation Act and the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act. The first allows eligible high school students to enroll in certain courses offered in programs that teach a trade, occupation or vocation at postsecondary institutions. The second allows students to enroll in college courses under certain conditions. Under both acts, the student's home district is required to pay the costs of taking the post-secondary courses, up to the prorated percentage of the student's state foundation allowance. Neither act specifies the number of years a student can be dually enrolled.

Some people are concerned that allowing fifth year students to participate in high school dual enrollment programs creates an incentive for students to stay in high school, and then receive assistance in paying for higher education. Legislation has been introduced to eliminate this incentive.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILLS:

The bills would amend the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act and the Career Technical Preparation Act, respectively, in order to make a student who had been in high school for more than four years ineligible for participation.

For the purposes of determining whether a student had been enrolled for more than four years, a student would not be considered to be enrolled in high school for a school year if he or she was enrolled for less than 90 days of the school year due to illness or other circumstances beyond the control of the student or the student's parent or guardian.

Under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (MCL 388.513), eligible high school students can dual-enroll in high school courses and in postsecondary courses under certain conditions. The act is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education.

Under the Career Technical Preparation Act (MCL 388.1903), an eligible high school student can enroll in certain courses offered by a career and technical preparation program at a postsecondary institution with some or all of the cost paid for by the home school district. The act is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

-Identical bills passed the House of Representatives in March 2004 during the 2003-04 legislative session by a vote of 102-0; however, they were not taken up by the Senate Committee on Education.

-For more information about other states' dual enrollment programs, visit the website of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities at www.aascu.org . From the Leadership menu, select publications. Then scroll to the bottom and find the May 2002 issue of State Policy Briefing, v.1, no. 1, entitled "Dual Enrollment."

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Michigan's dual enrollment program, funded through the School Aid Fund, was not intended to subsidize the higher education of fifth year high school students. Currently, there are a few reports that fifth year secondary students are using the program in this manner. To curtail the possible widespread use of the school aid fund to pay for students' postsecondary education, this legislation should be adopted.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Education supports the bills. (3-22-05)

The Michigan Education Association supports the bills. (3-22-05)

The Michigan Federation of Teachers and School Related Personnel support the bills. (3-22-05)

The Department of Labor and Economic Growth supports the bills. (3-1-05)

The Association of Michigan School Counselors is neutral on the bills. (3-1-05)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.