

Legislative Analysis



REVISE MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL MERIT CURRICULUM

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House Bill 5451

Sponsor: Rep. Edward McBroom

Committee: Education

Complete to 6-5-12

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5451 AS INTRODUCED 3-1-12

House Bill 5451 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278a & 380.1278b) to make the Michigan Merit Curriculum more flexible and change its college preparatory emphasis, by eliminating some required academic course credits and allowing students to replace them with career and technical education course credits. A more detailed description of the bill follows.

Mathematics

Currently the Michigan Merit Curriculum required of all Michigan high school students includes completion of at least 4 credits in mathematics to include: algebra I, geometry, algebra II or an integrated sequence of this course-content that consists of 3 credits; and an additional math credit such as trigonometry, statistics, pre-calculus, calculus, applied math, accounting, business math, a retake of algebra II, or a course in financial literacy. The law now specifies that a student may complete algebra II over two years with two credits awarded, or over 1.5 years with 1.5 credits awarded. Further, the law now specifies that a student also may partially or fully fulfill the algebra II requirement by completing a Michigan Department of Education approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum that has appropriate embedded mathematics content, such as a program or curriculum in electronics, machining, construction, welding, engineering, or renewable energy.

House Bill 5451 would require two credits in math, eliminating all of the requirements noted above except algebra I and geometry. House Bill 5451 also specifies that unless a student has already completed at least algebra II, he or she must successfully complete at least one math course during the final year of high school. Now under the law, each student must take a math course in their final year.

Social Science

Currently the Michigan Merit Curriculum requires completion of at least 3 credits in social science to include: at least one credit in United States history and geography, one credit in world history and geography, one-half credit in economics, and one-half credit in civics.

House Bill 5451 would require two credits in social science, requiring United States history and a civics course, while eliminating the United States geography, world history and geography, and economics requirements.

Health and physical education

Currently the Michigan Merit Curriculum requires completion of at least 1 credit in health and physical education.

House Bill 5451 would require ½-credit in health education, and retain but revise the ½-credit physical education requirement. Under the bill, the physical education course could be fulfilled by a student's participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity.

Arts education

Currently the Michigan Merit Curriculum requires completion of at least 1 credit in arts education including the visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts.

House Bill 5451 would eliminate the arts education requirement in its entirety.

Science

Currently the Michigan Merit Curriculum requires completion of at least 3 credits in science including biology and either chemistry or physics.

House Bill 5451 would modify these requirements, by reducing the number of science credits from 3 to 2, and eliminating the requirement that the student complete either chemistry or physics.

Foreign language

The Michigan Merit Curriculum requires that students, for students who entered Grade 3 in 2006 (that is, those who will be 9th graders in 2012), a requirement that they earn at least two credits in a language other than English (including American Sign Language) at any time in their K-12 coursework, either in school or on-line.

House Bill 5451 would eliminate the foreign language requirement.

Proposed Career and Technical Education Option

In addition to the proposed curricular changes described above, House Bill 5451 would revise the Michigan Merit Curriculum for high school students to require the successful completion of seven additional credits that meet one or both of the following options:

- (1) The credits are additional credits in ***mathematics, social science, or science*** that are aligned with guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education or are credits in ***a language other than English*** or in ***visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts*** as defined by the department in the following manner:

- At least two of the additional credits would be math credits that are aligned with department guidelines, including completion of either algebra II or a two-year technical math program.
- At least two of the additional credits would be social science credits that are aligned with department guidelines.
- At least one additional credit would be a science credit that is aligned with department guidelines.
- Not more than two of the additional credits could be in a language other than English, and not more than one of the additional credits could be in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts. (American Sign Language would be considered to be a language other than English.)

(2) The credits are career and technical education credits that meet the department's standards for career and technical education, in the following manner:

- A course in technical math that may be considered as completion of not more than one career and technical credit.
- The career and technical education credits could include work-based learning by a student working at a business or other work setting with appropriate oversight by the school district or charter school in the work setting in which the work-based learning occurs.

"Completing a credit"

Currently under the law, a student is considered to have "completed a credit" if he or she successfully completes a course that aligns with the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education. House Bill 5451 would revise this provision, to extend it to career and technical education credit, but the bill specifies that successful completion of career and technical education credits would occur when the course met subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the school district or the charter school (rather than the Michigan Department of Education).

Currently under the law, the Michigan Department of Education must submit a report at least every six months to the Senate and House education standing committees, concerning the status of the development of the department's subject area content expectations and guidelines. House Bill 5451 would eliminate this provision.

Personal Curriculum/Mathematics

Now under the law, the math requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum can be modified as part of a personal curriculum if a student successfully completes at least 3 total credits of math. House Bill 5451 would retain this provision, but reduce the number of credits successfully completed from 3 to 2.

Further, now under the law, the algebra II credit can be modified as part of a personal curriculum if the students meets one or more of the following: (1) successfully completes the same content as one semester of algebra II, (2) elects to complete the same content as

algebra II over two years (with a credit awarded for each of the two years), (3) enrolls in a formal career and technical education program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completes the same content as one semester of algebra II, as determined by the department, or (4) successfully completes one semester of statistics or functions and data analysis. House Bill 5451 would eliminate these provisions.

Now under the law, the visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts credit requirement may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the modification requires the student to complete one additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or one additional credit in a language other than English. House Bill 5451 would eliminate this provision.

High school accreditation

Now under the law, if the board of a school district or charter school wants its high school to be accredited under Section 1280 of the Revised School Code, they must ensure that all elements of the curriculum required are made available to all affected students. If a school district or charter school does not offer all of the required credits, then it must ensure that the student has access to the required credits by another means, such as enrollment in a postsecondary course under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act; enrollment in an online course, a cooperative arrangement with a neighboring school district or charter school; or granting approval under section 6(6) of the State School Aid Act for the student to be counted in membership in another school district. House Bill 5451 would retain these provisions, and also require that the school district or charter school ensure that the student has access to the required credits, such as enrollment in a postsecondary course under the Career and Technical Preparation Act, 2000 PA 258, (MCL 388.1901 to 388.1913).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would impose some additional costs and responsibilities on the Department of Education relative to the implementation of the revised high school graduation requirements (informing districts and the public of the revised requirements) and the approval of career and technical education programs. The bill provides that subject area content expectations for CTE programs would be developed by individual districts, rather than by the MDE. This would not, however, negate the responsibility of the department to approve all CTE programs or other department responsibilities under federal CTE laws.

The bill would also impact local course offerings as students are provided additional options in meeting the high school graduation requirements, potentially impacting local staffing and classroom needs.

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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.