

REVISE HIGH SCHOOL MERIT CURRICULUM

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House Bill 4465 (Substitute H-3)
Sponsor: Rep. Ed McBroom

House Bill 4466 (Substitute H-3)
Sponsor: Rep. Joel Johnson

Committee: Education
Complete to 5-28-13

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILLS 4465 (H-3) AND 4466 (H-3) AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE

Michigan high school students must complete the Merit Standard Curriculum, or an alternative Personal Curriculum (developed by faculty with the student, parents, and the school superintendent), in order to earn a high school diploma. (For a description of the requirements of the high school curriculum, see **Background Information**.)

House Bills 4465 (H-3) and 4466 (H-3) would amend two sections of the Revised School Code to change the requirements of the high school merit curriculum. The bills would modify the current requirements for algebra II, foreign language, the arts, social science, science, mathematics, and career and technical education.

The bills are tie-barred to each other so that neither could go into effect unless both are enacted into law. A more detailed summary of each bill follows.

House Bill 4465 (H-3)

This bill would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278a) to change the high school curricular requirements in mathematics, the arts, foreign language, and career tech in the following ways.

Algebra II and Technical Education

Currently a student can 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 4465 (H-3) would eliminate the phrase "that has appropriate embedded mathematics content." Instead, the provision would read: A student also could partially or fully fulfill the algebra II requirement by completing a department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum, such as a program or curriculum in electronics, machining, construction, welding, engineering, or renewable energy, *and in*

that program or curriculum successfully completing the same content as the algebra II benchmarks assessed on the department-prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the department.

Arts

Now under the law, a student must complete at least 1 credit in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts, as defined by the department. House Bill 4465 (H-3) would retain this provision, but specify that "a school district or public school academy is strongly encouraged to offer visual arts and performing arts courses."

Foreign Language

House Bill 4465 (H-3) would modify the requirement that students complete 2 credits in a language other than English. (American Sign Language is considered a language other than English for the purpose of this requirement.)

At present, beginning with students who entered grade 3 in 2006 (that is, beginning with those in grade 9 in 2012-13), all students must successfully complete during grades 9 to 12 at least 2 credits in a language other than English. House Bill 4465 (H-3) would instead require the successful completion *during grades K-12 of 2 credits of a foreign language that are grade appropriate*. Further, the bill specifies that a school board "is strongly encouraged to ensure all students complete at least 1 credit in a language other than English in grades K to 6."

In addition, House Bill 4465 (H-3) would allow a student to partially or fully fulfill the foreign language requirement by completing a department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum, or by completing visual or performing arts instruction that is in addition to already existing requirements in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts.

House Bill 4465(H-3) retains provisions in current law that (1) allow students to substitute for foreign language instruction the following other learning experiences that are substantially equivalent to 2 credits in a language other than English, based on department guidelines; and (2) allow students to fulfill all or part of the requirement with online course work.

Credits for Career and Technical Education

Current law defines successful completion of a credit as meeting subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education. House Bill 4465(H-3) would retain this provision, and add:

For a career and technical education credit, a school district or public school academy may supplement these content expectations and guidelines with additional guidelines developed by the school district or public school academy.

Health and Physical Education

Currently, a student must complete at least 1 credit in subject matter that includes both health and physical education. House Bill 4465(H-3) would retain this requirement. Changes proposed in the bill as introduced were removed in the substitute bill.

House Bill 4466 (H-3)

This bill would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278b) to further modify the high school Merit Curriculum in science, mathematics, algebra II, social science, and physical education, in the following ways.

- Prohibit the Department of Education, a school district, or a charter school from limiting or discouraging "the number of students with a personal curriculum on any basis other than the best interests of each individual student."
- Require that during the process of developing and reviewing a student's education development plan, the student be advised that many of the curricular requirements may be fulfilled through career and technical education.
- Add "anatomy" and "agricultural science" to the list of eligible science courses. This would mean the 3-science-course requirement could be met by completion of "at least biology, and either chemistry, physics, *anatomy or agricultural science.*" (See ***Background Information*** for a description of the current requirement.)
- Reduce the number of mathematics credits that must be successfully completed before a student's mathematics credit requirements may be modified as part of a personal curriculum. Currently 3 1/2 total math credits must be successfully completed; under the bill, a total of 3 math credits would have to be completed.
- Allow an additional option for satisfying the algebra II requirement, as follows.

Currently the algebra II credit can be modified as part of a personal curriculum, if the student meets 1 or more of the following: (1) successfully completes the same content as 1 semester of algebra II; (2) elects to complete the algebra II content over 2 years (with credit awarded each year); (3) enrolls in a formal career and technical education program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completes the same content as 1 semester of algebra II, as determined by the department; or and (4) successfully completes 1 semester of statistics or functions and data analysis.

House Bill 4466 (H-3) would retain these four options, but modify options (3) and (4) to read: *(3) enrolls in a formal career and technical education program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completes the same content as the algebra II benchmarks assessed on the department-prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the department, or (4) successfully*

completes 1 semester of statistics, functions, and data analysis, or technical mathematics.

- Allow a student, as part of a personal curriculum and after successfully completing 2 social science credits, to *fulfill the third high school social science credit by completing a formal career and technical education program.*
- Allow a student, as part of a personal curriculum, to *modify the health and physical education credit requirement, if the student must do so to complete a formal career and technical education program.*
- Allow a student, as part of a personal curriculum, to *modify the arts credit requirement, if the student must do so to complete a formal career and technical education program.*
- Eliminate references to "industrial technology courses, or vocational education" from the provision in the current law that allows (but does not require) a school board to provide the required Michigan Merit Curriculum "by using alternative instructional delivery methods. Now under the law, the alternative course work suggested includes humanities course sequences, career and technical education, *industrial technology courses, or vocational education*, or by a combination of these." The bill would eliminate "industrial technology courses" and "vocational education."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Michigan high school students must complete the Merit Standard Curriculum, or an alternative Personal Curriculum (developed by faculty with the student, parents, and the school superintendent) in order to earn a high school diploma. The Merit Curriculum entails the following course of study:

- 4 credits in English language arts.
- 3 credits in science, including at least biology and either chemistry or physics (with a fourth science credit strongly encouraged).
- 4 credits in mathematics, including at least algebra I, geometry, and algebra II, (or an integrated 3-credit sequence of this content plus an additional math credit in trigonometry, statistics, pre-calculus, calculus, applied math, accounting, business math, a retake of algebra II, or a course in financial literacy). A student may also fulfill the algebra II requirements by completing a MDE-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum that has appropriately embedded mathematics content as described in the law. In addition, a student can complete algebra II over a 2-year period; and each student must take a math course during the final year of high school enrollment.
- 3 credits in social science, including at least 1 credit in United States history and geography, 1 credit in world history and geography, one-half credit in economics, and a civics course.

- 1 credit in health and physical education.
- 1 credit in visual, performing, or applied arts.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state and local government. The Department of Education may face increased administrative costs related to revising the Merit Standard Curriculum and subject area content expectations. Local school districts and intermediate districts may face increased administrative costs due to the curriculum revisions but may also experience cost savings due to increased flexibility and the reduction in overall curriculum credit requirements.

POSITIONS:

The Van Buren Intermediate School District supports the bills. (4-17-13)

Calhoun Intermediate School District supports the bills. (4-17-13)

The Michigan Association of School Boards supports the bills. (4-17-13)

The Michigan Farm Bureau supports the bills. (4-17-13)

The Associated Builders and Contractors support the bills. (4-17-13)

The Michigan Association of School Administrators supports the bills. (4-17-13)

The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators supports the bills. (4-17-13)

A former Laingsburg school superintendent testified in support of the bills. (4-17-13)

The American Federation of Teachers supports House Bill 4466. (5-15-13)

Michigan Parents for Schools is neutral on the bills. (4-17-13)

Democrats for Education are neutral on the bills. (5-7-13)

The Michigan Department of Education opposes the bills. (5-7-13)

Oakland Schools opposes the bills. (4-17-13)

The Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce opposes House Bill 4465. (5-7-13)

The Michigan Association of Public School Academies opposes the bills. (4-17-13)

The Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals opposes the bills. (4-17-13)

Holland High School opposes the bills. (4-17-13)

The Michigan Association for Health, Physical Education opposes House Bill 4465. (4-17-13)

The American Federation of Teachers opposes House Bill 4465. (5-15-13)

The Great Lakes Education Project opposes the bills. (4-17-13)

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network opposes House Bill 4465. (4-17-13)

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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.