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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 66 (as introduced 1-23-13)
Sponsor: Senator John Proos
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 12-3-13

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to modify the Michigan merit standard requirements that a student must meet in order to receive a high school diploma. The bill would:

- Reduce the minimum number of credits required for mathematics courses from four to two, and delete the requirement for algebra II.**
- Provide that a pupil who had completed at least algebra II would not have to complete a math course in his or her final year of high school, as otherwise required.**
- Reduce the minimum number of credits required for social science from three to two.**
- Reduce the minimum number of credits required for science from three to two.**
- Remove a requirement for credit in visual, performing, or applied arts.**
- Remove a requirement for credit, or learning experience, in a language other than English, for pupils entering grade three in 2006 and after.**
- Require one half credit each in health education and physical education, instead of a full credit covering both.**
- Allow physical education requirements to be satisfied through participation in extracurricular athletics or other physical activity.**
- Require at least seven additional credits, which would have to be: 1) additional credits in math, social science, or science, or credits in a language other than English, visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts; and/or 2) career and technical education credits.**

The bill also would reduce the number of math and social science credits required for a personal curriculum.

In addition, for the purpose of accreditation, the bill would allow enrollment in a postsecondary course under the Career and Technical Preparation Act as a substitute for courses required under the Revised School Code.

Mathematics

Currently, to receive a high school diploma, the Michigan merit standard requires at least four credits in mathematics, including algebra, geometry, and algebra II, or an integrated sequence of this course content consisting of at least three credits, and an additional math credit, such as trigonometry, statistics, precalculus, calculus, applied math, accounting, business math, a retake of algebra II, or a course in financial literacy.

The bill would reduce the minimum number of credits in mathematics to two, and would eliminate the requirement for algebra II. The bill also would delete the provisions for an integrated sequence of the required course content.

Currently, students must complete at least one mathematics course during their final year in high school. Under the bill, this would be required unless they previously completed algebra II.

Social Science

The Michigan merit standard requires at least three credits in social science, including one credit in U.S. history and geography, one credit in world history and geography, one half credit in economics, and completion of one semester of civics.

The bill would reduce the minimum number of credits in social science to two.

The bill also would eliminate requirements for U.S. geography, world history and geography, and economics. Students would be required to complete one credit in U.S. history and one semester of civics.

Science

The Michigan merit standard requires at least three credits in science, including biology, and either chemistry or physics.

The bill would reduce the minimum number of credits in science to two, and would eliminate the requirement for chemistry or physics.

Arts

The Michigan merit standard requires at least one credit in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts.

The bill would eliminate this requirement.

Language

Currently, students who entered or enter grade 3 in 2006 and after must complete at least two credits in a language other than English, or must complete substantially equivalent course work or other learning experiences in grades K to 12.

The bill would eliminate this requirement.

Physical Education & Health

The Michigan merit standard requires at least one credit in subject matter that includes health and physical education.

The bill instead would require at least one half credit in health education and at least one half credit in physical education.

The bill would allow student participation in extracurricular athletics or activities involving physical education, to satisfy the requirement of one half credit in physical education.

Additional Credits

The bill would require the successful completion of at least seven additional credits. The makeup of these credits would have to satisfy the criteria in one or both of the following: 1) course completion as specified in Table 1, below, or 2) career and technical education credits.

Table 1

Course	Credits Required or Allowed
Mathematics	At Least Two Credits Required, Including Algebra II or Two-Year Technical Math Program
Social Science	At Least Two Credits Required
Science	At Least One Credit Required
Non-English Language	Up to Two Credits Allowed
Visual, Performing, or Applied Arts	Up to One Credit Allowed

Career and technical education credits could include up to one credit in technical math, and credits in work-based learning. Work-based learning would have to include appropriate oversight by the school district or public school academy over the student's experience and learning.

Personal Curriculum

Under certain circumstances, the Code allows the development of a personal curriculum that modifies some of the Michigan merit standard requirements. A pupil who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum may receive a high school diploma.

The mathematics credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard may be modified as part of a personal curriculum if the pupil successfully completes at least three and one half total credits of the merit standard math credits, including algebra I and geometry, before finishing high school, and successfully completes at least one math course during his or her final year of high school.

The bill would retain these requirements but reduce the total number of required math credits to two (which would be the same number required under the bill for the Michigan merit standard). The bill also would delete provisions for modifying the Michigan merit standard algebra II credit requirement (which the bill would eliminate).

A personal curriculum currently must include at least two credits in social science. The bill would reduce that number to one.

In addition, the bill would delete provisions for modifying the visual, performing, or applied arts credit requirement under the Michigan merit standard (which the bill would eliminate).

Accreditation

If the board of a school district or public school academy wants its high school to be accredited, the board must ensure that all elements of the Code's curriculum requirements are made available to all affected pupils. If a school district or public school academy does

not offer all of the required credits, the board must ensure that a pupil has access to the credits by other 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 academy, or approval for a pupil to be counted in another district's membership.

Under the bill, enrollment in a postsecondary course under the Career and Technical Preparation Act also would meet the requirement for access to the required credits.

MCL 380.1278a & 380.1278b

Legislative Analyst: Glenn Steffens

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Kathryn Summers

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.