

REVISE HIGH SCHOOL MERIT CURRICULUM

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House Bill 4465

Sponsor: Rep. Ed McBroom

House Bill 4466

Sponsor: Rep. Joel Johnson

Committee: Education

Complete to 4-8-13

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILLS 4465 AND 4466 AS INTRODUCED 3-14-13

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 mandated high school curriculum, see **Background Information.**)

House Bills 4465 and 4466 would amend two sections of the Revised School Code to change the requirements of the high school merit curriculum. They would eliminate the foreign language requirement and modify the credits that must be earned in health and physical education, the arts, career and technical education, science, and, mathematics.

The bills are tie-barred to each other so that neither could go into effect unless both are enacted.

A more detailed summary of each bill follows.

House Bill 4465 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278a) to change the high school curricular requirements in mathematics, physical education, 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 would eliminate this *italicized* language and specify instead that the algebra II requirement could be fulfilled by completing "a formal career and technical education program or curriculum that has an assigned classification of instructional programs code." [Note: The "classification of instructional programs code" was developed, and is regularly updated, by the U. S Department of Education National

Center for Education Statistics, to ensure that a standardized organizing taxonomy is used by post-secondary institutions to track fields of study and program completion activities.]

Health and Physical Education

Currently, a student must complete at least one credit in subject matter that includes both health and physical education.

House Bill 4465 would modify this provision to also allow "at least 1/2 credit in health aligned with guidelines developed by the department and approved by the State Board of Education, and at least 1/2 credit awarded by the school district or public school academy for approved participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity."

Arts

Now under the law, a student must complete at least one credit in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts, as defined by the department. House Bill 4465 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 would eliminate the 2-credit foreign language requirement.

At present, beginning with students who entered grade 3 in 2006 (that is, those who are in 9th grade this academic school year), all students must successfully complete during grades 9 to 12 at least 2 credits in a language other than English. However, the law allows fulfillment of the foreign language requirement any time during grades K to 12, and also allows students to substitute other substantially equivalent learning experiences; American Sign Language; and allows fulfilling all or part of the requirement with online course work. Instead, House Bill 4465 specifies that a school board "is strongly encouraged to offer instruction in at least one language other than English in grades K to 8 and is encouraged to offer that instruction in grades 9 to 12."

Standards 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 would retain this provision but modify it to allow school-based standards (rather than state-based standards) for career and technical education credits. Specifically, the bill says, "or, for a career and technical education credit, the student successfully completes the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the school district or public school academy that apply to the credit."

House Bill 4466

House Bill 4466 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278b) to further modify the high school Merit Curriculum in five ways.

- Add "agricultural science" to the list of eligible science courses, allowing the 3 science credits (described above) to be met by completion of "at least biology, and either chemistry, physics, or *agricultural science*."
- Prohibit a school district or charter school from limiting "the number of students with a personal curriculum on any basis other than the best interests of each individual student."
- 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, described as *approved technical mathematics*.

Currently the algebra II credit can be modified as part of a personal curriculum, if the student meets one or more of the following: (1) successfully completes the same content as one semester of algebra II; (2) elects to complete the algebra II content over two years (with credit awarded each year); (3) enrolls in a formal career and technical education program, and successfully completes the same content as one semester of algebra II; and (4) successfully completes one semester of statistics or functions and data analysis. House Bill 4466 would retain these five options, and add another called *approved technical mathematics*.

- 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 such as alternative course work, humanities course sequences, career and technical education, industrial technology courses, or vocational education, or by a combination of these."

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 two-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 one credit in United States history and geography, one 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.

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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.