

ELIMINATE ACT WORKKEYS OR SIMILAR ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

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House Bill 4162 (H-3) as reported from committee
Sponsor: Rep. John Reilly
1st Committee: Education
2nd Committee: Ways and Means
Complete to 6-19-19

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

BRIEF SUMMARY: House Bill 4162 would amend the Revised School Code to remove the requirement that the Michigan Merit Examination (MME) include an assessment that can be used in evaluating the student's workforce readiness.

FISCAL IMPACT: The bill would create savings for the state by eliminating the requirement that the MME include a workforce readiness assessment. Currently, the MME includes the ACT WorkKeys assessment to fulfill this requirement. In FY 2017-18, the state completed a three-year contract with ACT for the WorkKeys administration, scoring, and reporting, at a total cost of \$12.6 million.¹ For FY 2018-19, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) renewed the contract for a one-year extension for a cost of \$4.4 million. Student assessment contract costs are appropriated in section 104 of the State School Aid Act.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

At its introduction,² the WorkKeys assessment was touted as a way for employers to find prospective workers best suited for their needs, but, according to committee testimony, it has not fulfilled that promise. Of the approximately 92,000 jobs on the job search site indeed.com, only 32 referred to WorkKeys and 23 to the National Career Readiness Certificate awarded at the Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze-level. Some wonder if the assessment has outlived its usefulness, and the bill would seek to remove the requirement that it be administered.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

Currently, the MME must be administered to students in 11th grade (or 12th grade, if the student did not complete the MME in 11th grade), and must include the following:

- Assessments that measure English language arts, math, reading, and science, as well as writing skills, and that are used by colleges and universities for entrance or placement purposes.
- At least one test that assesses a student's reading and math skills in a way that employers can use in making employment decisions. The Department of Technology, Management, and Budget and superintendent of public instruction must ensure that the test can be used

¹ Represents School Aid costs only, excludes a separate GF contract for \$750,000 for the Department of Corrections to assess prisoners. The contract may be found here:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/micontractconnect/5500087_490178_7.pdf

² House Fiscal Agency summary of PA 349 of 2008 (HB 6412) <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2007-2008/billanalysis/House/pdf/2007-HLA-6412-1.pdf>

to secure the results of a nationally recognized evaluation of workforce readiness. (Currently fulfilled by the ACT WorkKeys assessment.)

- A social studies component.
- Any other component necessary to ensure that the MME complies with the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act and Every Student Succeeds Act.

The bill would remove the second requirement and retain the other three.

However, the bill provides that the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy (PSA) could provide students with the opportunity to take a workforce readiness assessment. If a district or PSA did so, the legislature would have to appropriate funds for reimbursement of that cost. Finally, the MDE would have to submit a report by June 1, 2020, and yearly thereafter on the number of districts and PSAs that offered the assessment and the number of students that took the assessment.

[Of note, while the bill would remove the WorkKeys requirement from the Revised School Code, the same language is replicated in section 104b of the State School Aid Act.³ Removal of the requirement would only occur if both were amended.]

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

MCL 380.1279g and proposed MCL 380.1279i

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Some argue that the WorkKeys test is unnecessary, duplicative, and costly. While questions are asked in a career-oriented context, supporters argued, they are still testing the same concepts as any other test—English and mathematics skills, for example. Why should students be subjected to additional hours of testing instead of instruction when the same topics are covered by the SAT, they wonder.

POSITIONS:

Representatives of the following entities testified in support of the bill:

Michigan Department of Education (with amendments) (2-19-19)

Brandon Public Schools (2-19-19)

Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (2-19-19)

West Michigan Talent Triangle (2-26-19)

Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Jackson, Lenawee, and Monroe ISDs (3-21-19)

³ Section 104b(2)(b): One or more tests from 1 or more test developers that assess a student's ability to apply at least reading and mathematics skills in a manner that is intended to allow employers to use the results in making employment decisions. The department of technology, management, and budget and the superintendent shall ensure that any test or tests selected under this subdivision have all the components necessary to allow a pupil to be eligible to receive the results of a nationally recognized evaluation of workforce readiness if the pupil's test performance is adequate.

The following organizations indicated support for the bill:

Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (2-19-19)
Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators (2-19-19)
Oakland Schools (2-19-19)
Wayne RESA (2-19-19)
Michigan Association of School Boards (2-19-19)
Michigan Education Association (2-19-19)
Middle Cities Education Association (2-26-19)

Representatives of the following organizations testified in opposition to the bill:

ACT, Inc. (2-19-19)
Grand Rapids Chamber (2-19-19)
Michigan Manufacturers Association (2-19-19)
AutoCam (2-19-19)
Huffmaster (2-19-19)
Michigan Chamber of Commerce (3-21-19)
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (3-21-19)
Operating Engineers 324 (3-21-19)
Wolverine Coil Spring (3-21-19)

The following organizations indicated opposition to the bill:

Talent 2025 (2-19-19)
Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (3-21-19)
Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (3-21-19)
Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters (3-21-19)
Home Builders Association of Michigan (6-19-19)

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