



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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**COLLEGE LEVEL EQUIVALENT
COURSES**

**House Bill 4640 as enrolled
Public Act 159 of 1996
Second Analysis (4-1-96)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Jessie Dalman
House Committee: Higher Education
Senate Committee: Education**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The public school system often does not provide the type of learning atmosphere necessary to challenge the above average student. Although there are currently options available to some high school students to participate in more challenging classes, these opportunities are limited. Some argue that under the current system many students are unaware of which courses and tests could be taken to provide college level credit.

Many Michigan schools offer college level equivalent courses as part of their curriculum. However, there is no current method to provide information regarding the different college level courses available and which courses might be best for a particular student. The current law regarding college level equivalent courses fails to encourage teachers or schools to place an emphasis on informing, preparing and encouraging students to take such courses.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4640 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.3 et al.) to provide students with access to information about high school courses that are taught at a postsecondary instruction level. The bill would add a new Part 14A to the code to establish "college level equivalent courses and credits," effective July 1, 1996.

College Level Equivalent Courses (CLECs). A CLEC would be defined under the bill to mean a course offered in high school, for which a pupil receives high school credit, that is taught at a postsecondary instruction level and is designed to prepare a pupil for a college level equivalent credit examination in a particular subject area. The board of each school district or public school academy would be required to ensure that each pupil in Grade 8 or higher was provided with both general information about CLECs, and with specific information about appropriate courses for that pupil. Each school district or public school academy would be able to either provide CLECs

directly, through an intermediate school district program, or by agreement in a consortium or cooperative program.

CLEC Directory. The state board would be required to publish a CLEC directory annually, and to distribute it to school districts and public school academies, and, upon request, to nonpublic high schools. The directory would list postsecondary Michigan institutions that granted college level equivalent credit, describe each institution's college level equivalent credit policy, detail the specific courses and number of credits for which college level equivalent credit could be granted, and the exam and scores that would be required to qualify for college level equivalent credit for each course. The state board would not include information about a particular postsecondary institution in the directory unless the information were reviewed by the institution before publication and its accuracy verified in writing.

Student Portfolios. A school district or academy that maintained pupil portfolios for its high school students would be required to include all academic records and correspondence concerning each pupil's participation in CLECs or postsecondary courses in each pupil's portfolio.

Accreditation. The bill would add to current accreditation requirements to specify that, beginning in the 1996-97 school year, a high school's annual educational report would have to include the following:

- a) The number and percentage of pupils enrolled in one or more postsecondary courses, under the provisions of the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (proposed in House Bill 4643) or under section 21b of the State School Aid Act (as amended by House Bill 4642) during the immediately preceding school year.
- b) The number of college level equivalent courses offered to pupils enrolled in the school, in the school

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district, and in consortia or cooperative programs available to pupils of the school district.

c) The number and percentage of pupils enrolled in at least one college level equivalent course during the immediately preceding school year, desegregated by grade level; and the number and percentage of these pupils who took a CLEC exam, and, of these, the number and percentage who achieved a score on a CLEC exam at or above the level recommended by the Testing Service for College Credit.

In addition, the Department of Education would have to prepare and submit an annual report to the legislature, using the information submitted, aggregated for statewide and intermediate school district totals.

Testing. The bill would also require the board of a school district, upon the written request of a student's parent or legal guardian, to allow a pupil who is in at least the tenth grade to take, without charge, the tests necessary to allow the student to attend postsecondary courses under House Bill 4643 (the high school proficiency tests, GED test, or MEAP test), provided that the student took the exams at a regularly scheduled time. The school district would not be required to report on the results of those grade 10 students who were allowed to take these tests. This section of the bill would be repealed June 30, 2001.

Tie-bar. House Bill 4640 is tie-barred to House Bills 4642 and 4643, which would create a Post Secondary Enrollment Options Act and make complementary amendments to the State School Aid Act.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Senate Fiscal Agency, the bill would result in minimal administrative expenses for the Department of Education, and could have an undetermined fiscal impact on local districts. (2-6-96)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would require that students be provided with information regarding the availability of CLECs in order to help them make informed decisions about taking particular courses. Offering college level courses to secondary level students, whose credits will be transferable to colleges or universities, would help to provide a more seamless transition between high school and college and give those students a head start at the next level of education. Currently, high school students who have the capacity to accept and meet the challenges inherent in attending and passing college level courses

are not generally made aware of any opportunity they might have to attend college level courses. A high school student who possesses the ability to take such a course should not be denied access merely because his or her peers are not yet ready to do so. Better information on and access to such courses will increase educational opportunities for students. Further, if enough students take advantage of these opportunities it might reduce the number of students seeking enrollment in postsecondary courses through the school district.

■ 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.