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## DUAL ENROLLMENT FOR CAREER AND TECH PREP PROGRAMS

### House Bill 5534 (Substitute H-2) First Analysis (5-4-00)

**Sponsor: Rep. Lauren Hager**  
**Committee: Education**

#### ***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

New technologic tools used for the design, manufacture, and distribution of goods have changed the world of work for nearly all Americans during the past two decades. The invention of the computer has, as it has matured, thrust us into a new economy that continues to develop in what has come to be called the information age. These changes in the economy require differently educated workers.

According to the 1998 Governor's Report to the Legislature entitled "Gold Collar Jobs: The Future of Michigan," the percentage of management and professional jobs which usually required a four-year college degree will remain relatively constant over the next decade. However, the percentage of jobs that require skills training will increase dramatically, while the percentage of jobs that go to unskilled workers will shrink. The report observes that this phenomena will create more "gold-collar" jobs, which are defined as those jobs within high-wage, high-skill, high-demand occupations.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor estimates significant increases in certain information technology positions. For example, while there were 506,000 systems analysts four years ago in 1996, employment for systems analysts is expected to increase by 103 percent, to 1,025,000 by the year 2006. Similarly, the number of computer engineers and computer scientists stood at 427,000 in 1996 and is expected to increase 114 percent, to 912,000 by the year 2006.

The growth in high-skilled jobs has not been limited to the computer field. The number of workers in precision production grew 20 percent from 1991 to 1996, while engineering and management services grew 44 percent over a similar period. Machine tool operator positions are expected to grow by over 50 percent before 2005, physical therapists by 74 percent, and pipelayers and fitters by 32 percent.

According to reports, the number of good-paying occupations in the Midwest that do not require a four-year college degree outpaces those that do. However, all of the 10 top jobs for which a degree is not necessary require technical training, including employment as millwrights, appliance repairers, tool and die makers, and science technicians. In addition, job growth is expected for drafters, electricians, carpenters, machine tool makers, some computer technicians, programmers, and computer network administrators.

Although many new employment opportunities appear imminent, few of them will be available to workers who are improperly educated or inadequately trained. Indeed, according to Michigan Future Inc., 1997, one in ten information technology jobs in the United States is currently unfilled, creating a stunning industry-wide unemployment rate of negative 10 to 15 percent. Further, the rate is falling, not rising, and more jobs are expected to be created in these fields. Consequently, and even as early as 1996, the unemployment rate for skilled production, crafts, and repair workers in Michigan was below the average for all workers in general, demonstrating the need that industry has for skilled employees.

In Michigan, an education that prepares a student for employment in high-skill work customarily begins in high school, often at a regional vocational technical center, and then continues two years beyond high school graduation in one of the state's 29 community colleges. These curricular options are sometimes called 'tech prep' (or technical preparation) courses of study because they concentrate the student's education and training on learning the sorts of information and knowledge that can be immediately helpful in the high-skill world of work. According to committee testimony, several of the state's community colleges have already re-designed their education programs as state-of-the-art 'tech prep' business training sites, and have developed their curriculum, instruction, and

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evaluation in league with corporate employers in the business community.

The need for literate and numerate workers who understand and use the most recent design and computing tools will require continually renewing educational opportunities of the sort that can incorporate thinking that relies on the most recently gained understanding of those technologies when they are utilized to their full capacity. Public schools too seldom provide these kinds of educational opportunities.

While the core technology of public schools has been and likely will continue to be teaching and learning within the subject matter disciplines, some observe that what is needed is new thinking within those disciplines--the kind of thinking that accommodates authentic problem-solving and that relies on more highly technologic tools. They argue that this kind of learning should be more present in Michigan schools, especially since businesses can employ students who are trained in this way. One way to accomplish this aim is to more closely connect the job skills training and education that already is available at the state's 29 community colleges with a larger array of highly technologic vocational opportunities in high schools and regional career and technical centers. To that end, legislation has been introduced to allow dual enrollment in high school and community colleges, and to more closely articulate the vocational curriculum at the three sites so that students seeking state-of-the-art employment training can more easily move between the three educational institutions.

### ***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

House Bill 5534 would create a new act to establish career and technical preparation enrollment options for students, to provide for payment of the course work in post-secondary institutions, and to establish new duties for public school districts, intermediate school districts, some postsecondary institutions, and the Department of Career Development. The act would take effect April 1, 2001, and payment of all or part of the charges for eligible courses would begin in the state fiscal year beginning on October 1, 2001. The act would be repealed June 30, 2006.

**Purpose.** The purpose of the act would be provide high school students with a wider variety of options, encouraging and enabling them to enroll in the courses being offered at postsecondary career and technical preparation programs when those programs are located at eligible postsecondary educational institutions.

[Under the bill, "eligible postsecondary educational institution" is defined to mean a state university, community college, or independent nonprofit degree-granting college or university that is located in this state and that chooses to comply with the act.]

**Notice by school district to students.** Under the bill, by May 1, 2001, and by March 1 of each school year thereafter, a school district would be required to provide general information about the career and technical preparation enrollment options to all students in grade 8 or higher.

In addition, each school district would be required to provide information to all high school students on the career and technical preparation enrollment options under the act, including the following: a) enrollment eligibility; b) the programs and types of courses that were eligible for participation; c) the decision-making process for granting academic credits; d) an explanation of eligible charges paid by the school district; e) eligibility for payment of all or part of charges by the school district; f) an explanation that if the student qualified for payment by the school district, the district would pay that support directly to the program upon being billed, and that the student would not be responsible for that payment, but would be responsible for payment of costs not paid under the act; g) available support services; h) the need to arrange an appropriate schedule; i) the consequences of failing or not completing a vocational education course in which the student enrolled; j) the effect of enrolling in a program on the student's ability to complete high school graduation requirements; k) an explanation of how the parent or legal guardian of a student in at least grade 10 may request that the student be allowed to take a test or assessment used for state endorsement early in order to qualify to be an eligible student; and, l) the academic and social responsibility that must be assumed by the student and his or her parent or guardian.

**Eligible students.** When any student who requested eligibility for the program was provided a letter signed by the high school principal, he or she could apply to, and if accepted could enroll in, a career and technical preparation program. A student would have to be in at least grade 11 and making satisfactory progress in meeting local attendance and graduation requirements. More specifically, the bill would define "eligible student" to mean a student enrolled in at least one high school class in at least grade 11 in a school district in this state, except a foreign exchange pupil enrolled in a school district under a cultural exchange program, who has achieved state endorsement in all subject areas

under section 1279 of the Revised School Code. [Section 1279 concerns the Michigan education assessment program (MEAP) for high school assessment of pupil performance in mathematics, science, social studies, and communication arts for the purpose of improving academic achievement and establishing a statewide standard of competency. Under the section, “communication skills” is defined to mean reading and writing, and “social studies” is defined to mean geography, history, economics, and American government.] However, the definition continues, if the student has not achieved state endorsement in all subject areas under that section, the student is an eligible student if the student achieves state endorsement in mathematics and a qualifying score on a nationally or industry recognized job skills assessment test as determined by the department.

Responsibilities of the career and technical preparation program. Under the bill, within a reasonable time, the program would be required to notify the school district, indicating the student’s courses and hours of enrollment. However, the program would be required to notify the student about tuition, fees, books, materials, and other related charges, and of the estimated amount of the eligible charges billed to the school district. Unless otherwise agreed between the program and the school district, and after the period of time during which students can drop or add courses, the program would be required to bill the student’s school district, detailing the charges for each course. A program could not charge a late fee to a student or a school district that was made in compliance with the timetable prescribed under the act.

Under the bill, a program could give priority to its postsecondary students when enrolling eligible students in its courses for high school credit only. However, once an eligible student had been enrolled, the program could not displace the student with another.

Responsibilities of the school district and student. Upon receiving the bill from a career and technical preparation program, the school district would be required to pay to it, on behalf of the eligible student, an amount equal to the lesser of the amount of the charges, or the prorated percentage of the state portion of the foundation allowance paid on behalf of that student. The proration would be based on the proportion of the school year that the student attended the program. This structured payment requirement would not prevent a school district from paying more money to the program, and it would allow the district to use local school operating revenue for that purpose. However, the student would be responsible for

payment of the remainder of the costs associated with his or her enrollment in the program that exceeded the amount the school district was required to pay.

The bill would not restrict the ability of a student to enroll in any career and technical preparation program without tuition and fee support.

Under the bill, a school district would be required to make available to an enrolled student copies of all correspondence in the possession of the district regarding the student’s participation in a career and technical preparation course. The school district would be required to keep this kind of correspondence for at least one year.

The bill specifies that if a school district pays for a student’s course books, they would be the property of the school district, and returned to the district after completion of the course.

House Bill 5534 further specifies that a student could not participate in intercollegiate athletics while enrolled in a career and technical preparation program, and would forfeit his or her eligibility for violating this prohibition.

Educational counseling. Under the bill and to the extent possible, a school district would be required to provide counseling services to students and their parents before a student enrolled in a career and technical preparation course, the purpose of which would be to ensure that they were fully aware of the benefits, risks, and possible consequences of enrolling in the course. Under the bill, the person providing the counseling would be required to encourage the student to also use available counseling services at the career and technical preparation program before the quarter or semester of enrollment, to ensure that anticipated plans were appropriate. A school district could provide the counseling required in a group meeting, if additional personalized counseling also was made available.

Before enrolling in a course, a student and his or her parent or guardian would be required to file with the program a signed form provided by the student’s school district, stating that the student is an eligible student, and that he or she had received the information and counseling specified under the bill. Upon request, the Department of Career Development would be required to provide technical assistance to a school district and to a program, in developing appropriate forms and counseling guidelines.

Course credit and payment. A student could receive payment by a school district for all or part of the charges for eligible courses, taken either for high school credit, or for postsecondary credit, or for both. At the time of enrollment, the student would be required to designate whether the course was for high school or postsecondary credit, and could make different credit designations for different courses. However, a student could not audit a course in which he or she were enrolled.

Under the bill, a school district would be required to grant academic credit to a student enrolled for high school credit if he or she successfully completed the course, as determined by the program. The amount of credit would be determined by the school district. Those credits would be counted toward graduation requirements and subject area requirements, and evidence of the course completion would be included in a student's high school record.

High school record and transcript. Subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, a program would be required to provide the school district with a copy of a student's grade in each course taken for high school credit. Upon request of a student, his or her record and transcript could include evidence of successfully completed postsecondary credits. In either case, the student high school record and transcript would indicate where the credits were earned.

Course articulation and alignment. If a student entered a career and technical preparation program after leaving high school, the program would have to award postsecondary credit, in accord with its policies, when a course had been successfully completed while the student was in high school. Further, the program could not charge a student for these credits.

Transportation. Under the bill, a school district would not be required to pay for transportation or parking for a student enrolled off-campus in a career and technical preparation program. Neither would a school district be liable for any injury incurred by a student that was related to transportation.

Refunds to school districts and students. Under the act, a school district could require a student to provide verification of regular attendance at the program, and if an enrolled student did not complete the course, and the school district had paid money for the course on behalf of the student, the program would be required to forward to the school district any funds that were refundable due to noncompletion of the course. The

school district, in turn, would be required to forward to the student any refunded money in excess of the amount paid by the district for the course.

Determining full-time enrollment. In determining full-time enrollment in a school district under the bill, or full-time equated membership under the School Aid Act, the student's enrollment in both the school district and the program would be counted as enrollment in the school district, and a student could not be considered to be enrolled in a school district less than full-time solely because of the effect of the student's enrollment on the number of class hours provided by the school district to the student. This would include necessary travel time.

Exclusions. The bill would not apply to any career and technical preparation courses in which a student was enrolled in addition to being enrolled full-time in his or her school district. Neither would it apply to a career and technical preparation course a student was retaking after failing to achieve a satisfactory grade. Finally, the bill would not apply to a course contrary to the eligibility provisions specified in the act.

Reporting requirements of intermediate school districts. Each intermediate school district would be required to annually collect for each of its constituent school districts, and provide to the Department of Education at the same time that it submits its financial report, information for the immediately preceding school year, including all of the following: a) the amount of money expended by the school district for payments required under the act; b) the number of eligible students, both in aggregate and by grade level, who were enrolled in the school district, and the number of those who enrolled in one or more courses and received payment of all or part of the charges; c) the percentage of the school district's enrollment represented by the eligible students both in the aggregate and by grade level; and, d) the total number of courses for which the school district made payment, the number of those for which high school and postsecondary credit was granted, and the number that were not completed by the student.

Reporting requirements of the Department of Career Development. Under the bill, not later than March 1 of each year, the Department of Career Development would be required to prepare and submit to the House and Senate Fiscal Agencies, and to the Department of Management and Budget, a summary annual report on the information received. The Department of Education would be required to work cooperatively with the Department of Career Development in the preparation of the report. Further, the Department of Career Development could promulgate the rules

considered necessary to implement the act, in accordance the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act of 1969.

**Repealer.** The bill also would repeal section 13 of the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act, Public Act 160 of 1996 (MCL 388.523). [This section specifies that the act takes effect April 1, 1996; that payment of all or part of eligible charges for postsecondary courses begins in the state fiscal year beginning on October 1, 1996; and, that the act is repealed effective June 30, 2001.]

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Fiscal information is not available.

### **ARGUMENTS:**

#### **For:**

This legislation will help students transfer more easily from high school to community college and then on to the world of work. The series of transitions between school and work can be a nearly seamless progression, if the career and ‘tech prep’ vocational education opportunities in schools can be more closely aligned with jobs available in business corporations. However, it is clear that businesses need employees who are differently educated than those prepared by the traditional academic school curriculum. For example, some corporations report there are unfilled jobs in the highly technologic skilled trades, and it seems likely those jobs will continue to stand empty until Michigan’s high school students have more opportunities to graduate from state-of-the-art ‘tech prep’ programs. Employers report that they need literate and numerate workers who can understand and use the most recent design and computing tools. In order to learn these kinds of skills, a student should be able to begin a course of study in high school and then continue beyond high school graduation to study an additional two years in a community college. An explicit dual enrollment policy that encourages well-prepared high schoolers to take course work in both high school and the local community college can give students the enrollment flexibility they need in order to move between the two instructional sites in educationally effective and cost-efficient ways.

#### **For:**

It has long been state policy to allow upper level high school students dual enrollment in high school and community colleges (and sometimes, although not as frequently, in universities) for academic course work.

This legislation extends that option to career and tech-prep education students, making their studies in high schools and local postsecondary institutions easier to pursue. As amended in the House Education Committee, the bill does *not* allow dual enrollment in high school and proprietary schools, but instead limits the dual enrollment to eligible postsecondary institutions such as community colleges whose high-skill programs are designed in conjunction with corporate employers so they can better prepare youngsters for the world of work where high-paying, high-skill jobs too often go unfilled.

### **POSITIONS:**

The Department of Career Development supports the bill. (5-2-00)

The Department of Education supports the bill. (5-2-00)

Port Huron Area Schools supports the bill. (5-2-00)

The Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals supports the bill. (5-2-00)

The Michigan Association of School Administrators and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators support dual enrollment for vocational technical education. (5-2-00)

The Michigan Community Colleges Association supports the bill. (5-2-00)

St. Clair Community College supports the bill. (5-2-00)

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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.