

**MEAP PROGRAM CHANGES;
PARENTAL ACCESS TO
CLASSROOMS**

House Bills 4129 and 4130
Sponsor: Rep. Andrew Raczkowski
Committee: Education

Complete to 4-10-01

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILLS 4129 AND 4130 AS INTRODUCED 2-6-01

House Bills 4129 and 4130 would, among other things, amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1279) and the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1704a), respectively, to transfer the administration of portions of the Michigan education assessment program (more customarily referred to as MEAP) from the Department of Education to the Department of Treasury. In doing so, the bills would codify some of the administrative changes made in Executive Order 1999-12 (which transferred to the Departments of Treasury and Career Development the administration of certain functions associated with the MEAP assessment in association with the implementation of the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship Program).

Omit MEAP test scores from transcript. In addition, House Bill 4129 would amend the Revised School Code to allow a student's parents to notify the board of a school district or the board of directors of a public school academy that his or her student's state endorsement test scores (earned on the 11th grade MEAP examinations) should be omitted from the student's transcript. House Bill 4130 would amend the School Aid Act to allow a student's parents to make the same request of the board of a school district, but the bill is silent with respect to making that request of the board of directors of a public school academy. Under both bills, the notification would have to be made within 60 days after receiving the scores. Currently, a student's high school test scores are automatically included on his or her transcript.

Prohibit restricting parental access to child's classroom. Further, House Bill 4129 would prohibit school officials from unreasonably restricting a parent's access to his or her child's classroom.

Transfer of MEAP functions. Currently under the law, the Department of Education administers the MEAP program, and the questions asked on the MEAP examinations are based on a model core curriculum developed and periodically updated by teachers and experts in the learning disciplines. After a period of research and development, the curricular standards are adopted by the State Board of Education. The MEAP examinations are criterion-referenced tests developed to assess students' subject matter knowledge. They are given in grades 4 (mathematics and reading), 5 (science, writing, and social studies), 7 (mathematics and reading), 8 (science, writing and social studies), and 11 (when all five subject areas are examined in an assessment known as the High School Test). The High School Test is administered during the last 30 school days of grade 11, and the Department of Education must ensure that assessments are scored and returned to students, their parents or guardians, and school district or public school academies no later than the beginning of the student's first semester of grade 12.

The High School Test (the MEAP assessment administered in grade 11) is scored in three categories to indicate ‘basic competency’, ‘above average’, and ‘outstanding’. The scale scores that establish the categories are set by the Department of Education, and under the law a student’s scale scores are included on his or her high school transcript. If the scale scores fall within the required range, then the student achieves a state endorsement in that subject area, and that endorsement also appears on his or her transcript. Under the bills, the scale scores would be set by the Department of Treasury, and that department rather than the Department of Education would establish the categories, and be responsible for designing and distributing to school districts and public school academies, the document that describes the categories. The Department of Treasury also would be responsible to score the assessments (either mechanically or by Michigan teachers), and to return the scores to students.

Under the bills, the Department of Treasury also would be responsible to ensure that the length of the assessments be the shortest possible while maintaining test reliability and validity, and to limit the test time to no more than eight hours. Further, the Department of Treasury would be responsible to establish re-testing periods throughout the year, and to coordinate the arrangements for repeat assessments.

Under current law, the State Board of Education develops or selects and approves assessment instruments to measure student performance in communication skills, mathematics, social studies and science, based on the state board model core academic content standards. The bills would require instead that the Department of Treasury develop or select assessment instruments that would be based on those standards as they are specified under section 1278 of the Revised School Code.

Currently the State Board of Education is advised by an 11-member assessment administration advisory committee that it appoints to advise the board on all MEAP tests, and on a variety of assessment-related matters, including how the assessments are used for state endorsements. The members of the committee are experts in test development or test administration. Under the bills, the advisory committee would be appointed by the Department of Treasury to advise that department.

Finally, both bills would delete an outdated provision that allowed students scheduled to graduate from high school in 1998 the opportunity to repeat assessments before their graduation. Further, both bills would delete a provision which required the Department of Education, the administrator of the MEAP program, to submit a comprehensive report to the legislature on the status of the program before July 1 of each year until 2000. That report included a) the annual assessment data, b) a description of the feedback provided to students, parents, and schools, c) a description of any significant alterations made in the program by the department or the State Board of Education, d) any recommendations for legislative changes, and e) an update of the reports of the assessment advisory committees of the state board.

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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.