

HIGH SCHOOL CORE CURRICULUM

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House Bill 5606 (Substitute H-7)

Sponsor: Rep. Brian Palmer

Committee: Education

Complete to 3-2-06

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5606 (H-7) AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE

House Bill 5606 (H-7) would amend the Revised School Code to prescribe high school graduation requirements for public schools and public school academies (charter schools).

Graduation Requirements

The bill specifies that beginning with students scheduled to graduate from high school in 2010, the board of a school district or board of directors of a charter school would be prohibited from awarding a high school diploma to a student unless he or she had successfully completed all the following minimum credit requirements as part of high school course work, aligned with subject area content expectations development by the Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education:

- Four credits in English language arts.
- Four credits in mathematics, including at least one algebra I credit, one algebra II credit, one geometry credit, and an additional mathematics credit. In the student successfully completes a credit in algebra I or algebra II before entering high school, he or she would be given high school credit for that credit. At least one of these credits must be completed during the student's last year in high school.
- Three credits in science, including completion of at least one biology credit, one chemistry or physics credit, and an additional science credit (at least one of which would be an approved course in earth science). If a student successfully completed one or more of these science credits before entering high school, the student would be given high school credit for each of them.
- One-half credit in civics, one-half credit in economics, one credit in U.S. history and geography, and one credit in world history and geography.
- One credit in subject matter that includes both health and physical education aligned with guidelines developed by the department.
- One credit in visual and performing arts aligned with guidelines developed by the department.

- One course or learning experience that was presented online, as defined by the department. (If a school district or charter school was unable to provide the basic level of technology and Internet access required by the state board to complete the online course or learning experience, then it would be encouraged to apply for an educational mandate rollback contract.)

Subject Area Content Expectations

The bill requires the Department of Education to develop subject area content expectations and guidelines for all elements of the curriculum, as follows:

- All course content expectations would have to be consistent with the state board-recommended model core academic curriculum content standards. They could not include attitudes, beliefs, or value systems that are not essential in the legal, economic, and social structure of our society, and to the personal and social responsibility of citizens of our society.
- The subject area content expectations and guidelines would have to be board-approved.
- The subject area content expectations would have to state in clear and measurable terms what students were expected to know upon completion of each credit.
- Except as otherwise provided, the subject area content expectations and guidelines would have to be developed by the department and approved by the state board not later than April 1, 2006. (However, the subject area content expectations for sophomore-level English language arts would have to be developed and approved before April 1, 2007, the junior-level standards by April 1, 2008, and the senior-level standards before April 1, 2009);

Foci of the Subject Area Content Expectations

The bill specifies the foci of the course content expectations, as follows: English language arts would have to include at least a focus on reading and writing; mathematics at least a focus on the study of measurement, properties, and relationships of quantities and sets, using both numbers and symbols; science would have to include at least the use of the scientific methods to critically evaluate scientific theories, and using relevant scientific data to assess the validity of those theories and formulate arguments for and against; civics would have to focus at least on the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of Michigan, and the history and present form of government of the United States and of this state and its political subdivisions; economics at least on the fundamental concepts of microeconomics, macroeconomics, international economics, and personal finance; U.S. history and geography including at least a focus on the history of the American experiment of liberty under law, and cover American colonial heritage and the founding of the republic to present day; world history and geography at least a focus

on analyzing and interpreting documents, accounts, artifacts, and historical sites from the earliest civilizations to present day to understand the long-term consequences of decisions or events; the guidelines for providing subject matter that includes health and physical education would have to be consistent with the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education; and, the guidelines for providing instruction in visual and performing arts would have to include at least a focus on expanding a student's creative capacity by providing firsthand experience with works of art or music.

The Department of Education would have to implement a process for developing the subject area content expectations and guidelines required by the legislation, and that process would have to provide for all of the following:

- Soliciting input from all of the following groups: recognized experts in the relevant subject area; representatives from four-year colleges or universities, community colleges, and other postsecondary institutions; teachers, administrators, and school personnel who have specialized knowledge of the subject area; representatives from the business community; representatives from vocational and career and technical education providers; government officials, including officials from the legislature; and parents of public school students.
- A review of the subject area content expectations or guidelines by national experts.
- An opportunity for the public to review and provide input on the proposed subject area content expectations or guidelines before they were submitted to the state board for approval. The time period allowed for this review and input would be at least 15 days.

The department also would have to determine the basic level of technology and Internet access that would be required for students to complete the online course or learning experience, and submit that determination to the state board for approval.

Finally, the department would be required to develop and make available material to assist school districts and charter schools in implementing the requirements. This would include developing guidelines for alternative instructional delivery methods.

Subject Area Content Expectations Oversight

Under the bill, the State Board of Education would be required to approve subject area content expectations and guidelines developed by the Department of Education before they took effect.

Personalized Curricula

Under the bill, a student could request a personalized curriculum modifying his or her individual high school curriculum requirements for grades 11 and 12. However, a

student who was at least age 16 could request a personalized curriculum modifying his or her individual high school curriculum requirements for any semester that begins after the student turns 16.

If all of the requirements were met, then the board of a school district or board of directors of a charter school could award a high school diploma to a student, even if he or she did not meet the graduation requirements specified earlier in the bill.

All of the following would apply to the personalized curriculum:

- It would be developed by a group consisting of the student, at least one of the student's parents or a guardian, and also the student's high school counselor or another designee selected by the principal. (However, if the student were 18 or older or an emancipated minor, the student could decide whether to include a parent or guardian.)
- The personalized curriculum would have to
 - Incorporate as much of the subject area content expectations as practicable.
 - Establish measurable goals that the student must achieve while enrolled in high school and provide an evaluation method.
 - Be designed to prepare the student for employment after graduation from high school, or for enrollment in a four-year college or university, a community college, or a postsecondary trade, technical, or vocational institution after graduation from high school.

Before the curriculum took effect, it would have to be agreed to by the student's parent or guardian, and by the superintendent of the school district, or chief executive of the charter school (or a designee). Unless the student were 18, the student's parent or guardian would have to be in communication with each of the student's teachers at least once each calendar quarter to monitor the student's progress toward the goals contained in the personalized curriculum. The student's progress would be monitored annually by the group including the student's parent, teacher, and high school counselor, and modifications could be made if all agreed to them.

Special Education Services

The bill specifies that if a student received special education services, then the student's individualized education program would have to be in accord with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, identify the appropriate course or courses of study and identify the supports, accommodations, and modifications necessary to allow the student to progress in the general education curriculum, or in a personalized curriculum, and meet the requirements for a high school diploma.

Implementation Date

If a student was unable to meet a requirement for a high school diploma because the state board had not approved subject area content expectations for a credit, or the department or state board otherwise has not complied with this legislation, then that requirement would not apply to the student. Further, if any of the subject area content expectations and guidelines required under the legislation were not approved by the state board by the dates specified above, then the requirements of the legislation would apply beginning with students scheduled to graduate from high school in 2011 instead of those scheduled to graduate in 2010.

Alternative Instructional Delivery Methods

A school district, intermediate school district, or charter school would be required to ensure that content expectations for the courses noted above were met either by providing the credits specified above or by using alternative instructional delivery methods, such as alternative course work, career and technical education, or humanities course sequences. The purpose of the career and technical education would be to prepare students for careers after high school. School districts and charter schools that operated career and technical education programs are encouraged to integrate the credit requirements specified in the legislation, into those programs.

School District Responsibilities

Under the bill, if a school district or charter school wanted its high school to be accredited under the School Code, the board would have to ensure that all elements of the curriculum required in this legislation were made available to all affected students. Further, if the required courses were not offered in a district or charter school, the boards would have to ensure that the students had access to the required courses by another means, such as, enrollment in a postsecondary course under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act; a cooperative arrangement with a neighboring school district or charter school; or by granting approval for the student to be counted in membership in another school district.

Supplemental Services

If a student were not successfully completing a credit required for graduation, or was identified as being at risk of withdrawing from high school, then the student's school district or charter school would be required to notify the student's parent or legal guardian (or if the student was an emancipated minor, the student) of the availability of tutoring or other supplemental educational support and counseling services that could be available to the student under existing state or federal programs, or under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

School Waivers

The bill specifies that if a school district or charter school did not offer all or the required credits or provide options to have access to the required credits, then its officials would be encouraged to apply for an education mandate rollback contract.

Highly Qualified Teachers

If a school district or charter school demonstrated to the Department of Education that it was unable to meet the requirements of this legislation because it was unable to hire enough highly qualified teachers, then the department would be required to work with the district or charter school to develop a plan that would allow the district or charter school to hire enough teachers in order to meet the requirements of the law.

Foreign Language

Under the bill, the Department of Education would be required to develop, with state board approval, a model policy regarding instruction in languages other than English. The model policy would address the grade levels, in both the elementary and secondary levels, at which students learn languages other than English most effectively, and provide guidelines on how to provide instruction in those grades. American Sign Language would be considered a language other than English. School districts and charter schools would be encouraged to provide instruction in accord with the model policy.

Individual Educational Development Plans

Under House Bill 5606 (H-7), school boards and charter school boards of directors that operated high schools would be required to ensure that each student entering high school had an educational development plan. That plan would be based on a student's individual career or educational goals and have to identify which courses the student should enroll in during each grade of high school, in order to achieve those goals. Further the educational development plan would have to identify all of the following:

- Courses that were aligned with the student's career or educational goals, and that the student would enroll in to complete the curriculum required under this legislation.
- Elective courses that were aligned with the student's goals, and that would prepare the student for employment after graduation from high school, or for enrollment in a four-year college or university, a community college, or a postsecondary trade, technical, or vocational institution after graduation from high school.
- Measurable goals that a student should achieve while enrolled in high school that indicated the student was making progress toward his or her goals.

The bill specifies that an educational development plan would be developed by the student with the supervision of a counselor. Further, the board of the school district or charter school would be required to ensure that the student's parents (or legal guardian) had an opportunity to participate in the development of the plan. They would also be responsible for periodically notifying the students' parents about the students' progress toward meeting the plan's goals. Finally, the student would have to be given an opportunity to annually review and modify the plan, and those modifications would be made in the same manner as the plan was developed.

Successful Completion of Requirements

Under the bill, a student would be considered to have completed one credit if he or she met the subject matter content expectations or guidelines developed by the Department of Education. A course would be successfully completed if the student did either of the following: a) earned a passing grade; or b) earned a qualifying score, as determined by the state board, on an assessment developed or selected by the department and approved by the state board that measured a student's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines. Until the state board-approved assessments for the purposes of this requirement, a school district or charter school could award credit to a student if the student received a passing grade, as determined by the school district or charter school, on an assessment selected by the district or charter school.

School Accreditation

The bill would require the state superintendent of public instruction to annually review and update the school accreditation standards, using the process prescribed under the law. Under the current law, the accreditation standards include student performance on MEAP tests. The bill would add student performance on the Michigan Merit Examination when that test has been fully implemented.

The bill specifies that beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, a high school would not be accredited by the Department of Education unless the department determined that the high school was providing, or had otherwise ensured that all students had access to, all of the elements of the curriculum required under this legislation as finally approved by the state board. If it were necessary for the state superintendent to revise accreditation or summary accreditation standards to comply with the changes made, then the review standards would have to be developed, reviewed, approved, and distributed using the same process currently prescribed under the law.

(Currently under the law, the department develops the standards and distributes them to all public schools; holds statewide public hearings to receive testimony; reviews the testimony and revises the standards; submits them to the state superintendent who may also revise them, before submitting them to the Senate and House committees having responsibility for education legislation. Upon approval by these the committees, the department distributes the standards to all schools.)

Repealer

The bill would repeal Section 1166 of the Revised School Code, effective July 1, 2007. That section of the code sets the current requirement that a high school student take a one credit, one-semester civics class before graduating.

Tie-Bar

House Bill 5606 is tie-barred to House Bills 4079 and 4080, which passed the House earlier in the legislative session. These bills constitute the Educational Flexibility program, and would allow school districts to apply to the state superintendent of public instruction for waivers of state education requirements found in law, rules, and regulations. House Bill 5606 would not go into effect unless those bills also were enacted into law.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact of the bill would vary by school district or charter school depending on the extent to which each is already providing and/or requiring successful completion of the proposed course requirements. Districts and charter schools that do not currently provide all the proposed required courses would incur costs either by having to add courses and/or staff or to send students to postsecondary institutions or other districts in order to fulfill certain course requirements. The average cost of education per student also could increase due to an increased number of students needing to retake courses in order to fulfill the proposed requirement that they must pass each course.

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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.