

Legislative Analysis



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

Mitchell Bean, Director
Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

Senate Bill 403 (Substitute S-1)
Sponsor: Sen. Wayne Kuipers
House Committee: Education
Senate Committee: Education

Complete to 6-4-07

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 403 (S-1) AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 5-3-07

The bill would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278b) to do the following:

- Permit the parent or legal guardian of a transfer student who had completed at least two years of high school credit out-of-state, or at a nonpublic school, to request additional modifications of the Michigan Merit Standard as part of the student's personal curriculum.
- Remove a requirement that the Department of Education develop or select and approve specific assessments that school districts and charter schools could use to determine whether a pupil has successfully completed a credit under the Michigan Merit Standard.

Personal Curriculum. Under the Code, beginning with students who entered 8th grade in 2006, the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy (customarily called a charter school) may not award a high school diploma to a student unless the student completes the credit requirements of the Michigan Merit Standard, including specific credits in math, science, English, social sciences, and other subject areas. The credits must be aligned with subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the Department of Education.

The Code allows the parent or legal guardian of a student to request a personal curriculum for the student that modifies some of the Michigan Merit Standard requirements. If the personal curriculum meets certain conditions, and if the student successfully completes it, he or she may be awarded a high school diploma even if the curriculum does not meet all of the requirements of the Michigan Merit Standard.

Under Senate Bill 403 if a student transferred to a school district or public school academy from out-of-state or from a nonpublic school, a parent or legal guardian could request, as part of the student's personal curriculum, a modification of the Michigan Merit Standard requirements that would not otherwise be allowed, if all of the following were met:

- The student had completed successfully at least the equivalent of two years of high school credit out-of-state or at a nonpublic school.
- The personal curriculum incorporated as much of the subject-area content expectations of the Michigan Merit Standard as was practicable for the student.
- The personal curriculum included the civics course required under the Code.

The personal curriculum also would have to require that the student successfully complete at least one math course during the final year of high school enrollment. If the student were enrolled in the school district for at least one full school year, that math course would have to be at least algebra I. If the student demonstrated that he or she had mastered the content of algebra I, then the personal curriculum would require that the course be one that is normally taken after the completion of algebra I.

The school district or public school academy could use appropriate assessment examinations to determine what credits, if any, the student had earned out-of-state or at a nonpublic school that could be used to satisfy the curricular requirements of the Michigan Merit Standard, as well as the bill's requirement that the student successfully complete the equivalent of two years of high school credit out-of-state or at a nonpublic school.

Delete MDE End-of-Course Exam Development/Selection. The Code requires the Department of Education, by January 3, 2010, to develop or select and approve assessments that school districts and charter schools may use to determine whether a student has successfully completed a required credit under the Michigan Merit Standard, including assessments for algebra I, geometry, algebra II, earth science, biology, physics, chemistry, English in 9th grade through 12th grade, world history, U.S. history, economics, and civics. The assessments for each credit must measure a student's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to that credit. Senate Bill 403 would delete these provisions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would result in a savings to the State School Aid Fund. The FY 2007-08 Executive Budget includes \$4.4 million in School Aid Funds to the Department of Education (DOE) for the development and administration of end-of-course exams. The estimated total cost for implementation of all the required tests is \$15 million. The proposed legislation would eliminate the requirement that the DOE provide and administer end-of-course exams and thus would avoid these costs.

The bill would have an indeterminate increase to local school districts. By striking the DOE's role in end-of-course assessments, the responsibility would fall on school districts to develop or purchase and administer end-of-course exams. The impact to school districts will depend on the extent that each school district has begun this endeavor.

Legislative Analyst: J. Hunault
Fiscal Analyst: Mary Ann Cleary
Bethany Wicksall

■ 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.