

Legislative Analysis



MODIFY MATH GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND PERSONAL CURRICULUM

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House Bill 4511

Sponsor: Rep. Douglas Geiss

Committee: Education

Complete to 8-18-09

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4511 AS INTRODUCED 3-4-09

House Bill 4511 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278b) to alter the process by which a personal curriculum can be sought for a high school student in order to modify the standard Michigan Merit Curriculum. It would specify that a personal curriculum could be sought for a student who had completed Grade 9 and would expand the list of those who could request the personal curriculum on behalf of a student. In addition, the bill would allow modification of the high school mathematics requirements to occur after a student had completed 1-1/2 credits of math, (without necessarily having attained a passing grade), instead of having successfully completed 2-1/2 credits.

Personal Curriculum Provisions

Who may request a curriculum. Currently, the *parent or legal guardian* of a student may request a personal curriculum that modifies the Michigan Merit Standard Curriculum requirements. If all of the requirements for a personal curriculum are met, then the board of a school district or charter school may award a high school diploma to a student who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum. (The Revised School Code, however, does not require that a school district provide a personal curriculum to a student nor would the bill require that a school district do so.)

House Bill 4511 would modify the personal curriculum provision to expand those who could request a personal curriculum so that it would apply to (1) a parent or legal guardian of a student who had completed Grade 9; (2) a teacher who was teaching the student and who taught in or had expertise in a subject area that would be modified by the personal curriculum or who was determined by the principal to have qualifications otherwise relevant to developing a personal curriculum; or (3) a school counselor or school employee qualified to act in a counseling role.

In addition, the bill specifies that a teacher, school counselor, or school employee qualified to act in a counseling role under Section 1233 or 1233a of the code could contact a student's parent or legal guardian to discuss the possibility and potential benefits of a personal curriculum.

Curriculum development group. The law currently requires that a personal curriculum be developed by a group that includes at least the student, at least one of the student's

parents or a legal guardian, and the student's high school counselor or another designee qualified to act in a counseling role selected by the high school principal. House Bill 4511 would expand this group to include a teacher. The teacher included in the group developing the personal curriculum would be one who was teaching the student, who taught in (or whose expertise was in) a subject area being modified by the personal curriculum, or who was determined by the principal to have qualifications otherwise relevant to the group.

Mathematics Credit Requirement

Currently under the law, the mathematics credit requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum can be modified as part of a personal curriculum only after the student has *successfully* completed at least 2 -1/2 credits of the mathematics credits required, and only if the student successfully completes at least 3-1/2 total credits of the math credits before completing high school. Under House Bill 4511 the mathematics credit requirements of the personal curriculum could be modified after the student had completed "without necessarily having attained a passing grade in" at least 1-1/2 credits of the math credits required.

At present the Algebra II credit that is required can be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the student has successfully completed at least two credits of the mathematics credits required under the Michigan Merit Curriculum. House Bill 4511 would delete this requirement.

The bill would retain the language that says the Algebra II credit can be modified as part of a personal curriculum if the student meets one or more of the following: (1) has successfully completed the same content as one semester of Algebra II, as determined by the Department of Education; (2) elects to complete the same content as Algebra II over two years, with a credit awarded for each of those two years, and successfully completes that content; or (3) enrolls in a formal career and technical education program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completed the same content as one semester of Algebra II, as determined by the department.

Curriculum Requirements through Career and Technical Education

Finally, House Bill 4511 would require that a school district or public school academy that intended to provide some or all of the curriculum requirements found in Sections 1278a and 1278b of the code through career and technical education, industrial technology courses, or vocational education submit to its intermediate school district a plan for doing so. The intermediate school district would be required to compile and submit all of these plans to the Department of Education not later than February 1 of each year. The department would review and respond to each plan not later than the next June 1. If the department did not act to disapprove a plan by June 1, then the plan would be considered approved, and the school district or charter school could proceed according to the plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact for both the State and for school districts. While changing the personal curriculum provisions and the mathematics requirements would likely have no fiscal impact, the bill would potentially increase administrative costs to schools, ISDs, and the Department of Education by requiring that districts submit to ISDs plans to fulfill some of the curriculum requirements through career and technical education courses, that ISDs compile and submit such plans to the Department, and that the Department review and respond to each plan.

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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.