

Legislative Analysis



MICHIGAN MERIT CORE: VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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House Bill 5456

Sponsor: Rep. Joel Johnson

Committee: Education

Complete to 6-5-12

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5456 AS INTRODUCED 3-6-12

House Bill 5456 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278a & 380.1278b) to revise the Michigan high school Merit Curriculum to allow for the completion of certain vocational technical or career and technical education courses in lieu of some high school diploma requirements. A more detailed description of the bill follows.

Under the bill, if a student successfully completed at least one full high school year in a planned program of vocational-technical or career and technical education that was approved both by the student's parent (or legal guardian, or the student if an emancipated minor), and by the student's school district or charter school, then both of the following would apply:

- The student would not be required to successfully complete any of the following:
 - Algebra II, or a mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment;
 - A third year of science;
 - A credit in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts; and
 - One online course or learning experience.
- Further, the student would be required to successfully complete only one of the following:
 - A fourth credit of English language arts; or
 - A second credit in a foreign language.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Now under the law, a Michigan high school student must successfully complete the Michigan Merit Curriculum to earn a diploma. The required curriculum includes:

- ❖ 4 credits of English language arts
- ❖ 4 credits of mathematics (including algebra, geometry, algebra II, and a math class in the final high school year)
- ❖ 3 credits in social science (including US history and geography, world history and geography, and civics)
- ❖ 3 credits in science (including biology and either chemistry or physics)

- ❖ 1 credit in visual, performing, or applied arts
- ❖ 1 credit in health and physical education
- ❖ an online learning experience
- ❖ 2 credits of foreign language (taken at some time over the K-12 experience).

The Michigan Merit Curriculum can be modified in a *personal curriculum plan*, allowing a student to design an individual learning plan. In doing so, a student may substitute an array of arithmetic and mathematics courses for those required (for example, statistics or functions, data analysis, trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus, applied math, accounting, business math, a retake of algebra II, a course in financial literacy); and, a student may enroll in a formal career and technical education program (such as electronics, machining, construction, welding, engineering, or renewable energy), among other things.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would impose some additional costs and responsibilities on the Department of Education relative to the implementation of the revised high school graduation requirements (informing districts and the public of the revised requirements) and developing guidelines for use by districts. The bill would also impact local course offerings as students are provided additional options in meeting the high school graduation requirements, potentially impacting local staffing and classroom needs.

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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.