

# Legislative Analysis

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## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS ADDED TO GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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

**House Bill 4315 as introduced**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Beth Griffin**

Analysis available at  
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

**House Bill 4316 as introduced**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Curt VanderWall**

**Committee: Workforce and Talent Development**  
**Complete to 3-20-17**

### SUMMARY:

House Bills 4315 and 4316 would amend the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements under the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1278a and 1278d) by reorganizing and expanding certain categories.

Currently, as part of the requirements for a high school diploma, students must complete at least one credit in the visual, performing, or applied arts and at least two credits in a language other than English (described in greater detail in **BACKGROUND**, below).

Instead, HB 4316 would replace those two requirements, comprising three credits, with three credits of "21st century skills," and HB 4315 would state that the 21st century skills requirement could be met by completing any combination of three credits of the following:

- A grade-appropriate language other than English any time between kindergarten and 12th grade, or coursework or other learning experiences that are substantially equivalent to credits in a language other than English, based on Michigan Department of Education (MDE) guidelines;
- Visual, performing, or applied arts, as defined by the MDE;
- Computer science or computer coding, or a combination of the two; or
- An MDE-approved formal career and technical education program.

Now and under the bills, American Sign Language counts as a language other than English; the foreign language requirement may be satisfied with online coursework; and a district or public school academy (PSA) is strongly encouraged to offer visual arts and performing arts courses.

The bill would take effect 90 days after it is enacted into law.

### BACKGROUND:

Michigan high school students must complete the Merit Standard Curriculum, or an alternative Personal Curriculum (developed by faculty with the student, parents, and the

school superintendent) in order to earn a high school diploma. The Merit Curriculum entails the following course of study:

- 4 credits in English language arts.
- 3 credits in science, including at least biology and either chemistry, physics, anatomy, or agricultural science, or a program providing the same content (with a fourth science credit strongly encouraged). A student may fulfill the requirement for the third science credit by completing a department-approved computer science program or curriculum or formal career and technical education program or curriculum.
- 4 credits in mathematics, including at least algebra I, geometry, and algebra II, (or an integrated 3-credit sequence of this content) plus an additional math credit in trigonometry, statistics, pre-calculus, calculus, applied math, accounting, business math, a retake of algebra II, or a course in financial literacy. A student may also fulfill the algebra II requirements by completing a MDE-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum that has appropriately embedded mathematics content as described in the law. In addition, a student can complete algebra II over a 2-year period; and each student must take a math course during the final year of high school enrollment.
- 3 credits in social science, including at least 1 credit in United States history and geography, 1 credit in world history and geography, one-half credit in economics, and a civics course.
- 1 credit in health and physical education.
- 1 credit in visual, performing, or applied arts.
- 2 credits that are grade-appropriate in a language other than English between kindergarten and 12th grade, beginning with the class of 2016. For students graduating high school in 2016 to 2021 only, one credit of that requirement may be met in whole or in part by completing a department-approved formal technical education program or curriculum, or by completing visual or performing arts instruction that is in addition to the one credit of visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts that is also required to receive a high school diploma.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The bills would have no fiscal impact for the State or for school districts, public school academies (PSAs), or intermediate school districts (ISDs).

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