

Legislative Analysis



MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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

House Bill 4156 (proposed substitute H-1)

Sponsor: Rep. Jaime Greene

Committee: Education and Workforce

Revised 4-21-25

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

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4156 would amend the Revised School Code to modify certain content area credit requirements within the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The curriculum includes required content areas and the corresponding number of credits that students must complete to graduate from high school. While the curriculum lists courses that, if successfully completed, constitute fulfillment of a required content area, students can also meet content requirements by taking other courses that integrate content from multiple standards as long as the courses are aligned with the subject area content expectations set by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and approved by the State Board of Education.

Mathematics

The bill would retain the currently required four credits of math, but would modify how the credits can be earned. The bill would specify that three credits must be earned in alignment with the state approved content expectations, with the final credit determined by the board of the school district or public school academy (PSA, also commonly referred to as a charter school).

The bill also would amend provisions that describe alternates to satisfying the mathematics credits requirements as part of a personal curriculum. Under the bill, the math credits requirement could be modified if a student successfully completes three credits (rather than the current 3.5 credits) prior to completing high school, and the bill would remove references to Algebra II, which would become an optional course to complete toward the required math credits under the bill.

Science

Students would still be required to complete at least three credits in science, although the bill would remove references to specific topics that constitute completion of this requirement. The bill would also remove language strongly encouraging students to complete a fourth science credit in science.

Personal Finance

Beginning with students entering eighth grade in 2023, a half credit in personal finance is required for graduation. The bill would eliminate a current requirement that the half credit fulfill a half credit of math, of the arts, or of a foreign language as determined by the board of the school. The bill would retain a provision that allows that half credit to be fulfilled through an MDE-approved CTE program that is aligned with the subject area content expectations.

Foreign Language

The bill also would provide that computer coding is considered to be a language other than English for purposes of meeting the foreign language credit requirement. Presently, the law strongly encourages schools to have students complete at least one credit in a foreign language between kindergarten and sixth grade. The bill would amend this to strongly encourage completion of two credits of a foreign language by eighth grade.

Workforce Development Skills

The bill would require, beginning with students entering grade 8 in the 2029-2030 school year, a half credit to be earned in workforce development in a course that aligns with subject area content expectations developed by MDE and approved by the State Board. The course would have to include instruction on at least all of the following:

- Resume building.
- Career pathway exploration.
- General workplace development components.

MCL 380.1278a and 380.1278b

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would create new costs for the state and would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on local school districts, PSAs, and intermediate school districts (ISDs).

Under the bill, MDE would be required to develop subject area content expectations for the half credit course in workplace development. The magnitude of this cost is unknown.

Certain districts, PSAs, and ISDs could realize increased costs if they do not currently offer a course that meets the subject area standards MDE is directed to establish for a half credit in workplace development. Some districts, PSAs, and ISDs may absorb these costs using existing staff time, but others may be required to hire additional staff to provide the course to all students (beginning with pupils entering eighth grade in the 2029-2030 school year) before they graduate.

However, districts, PSAs, and ISDs could also realize cost savings due to the new flexibility for fulfilling course requirements in mathematics, foreign language, and science.

Legislative Analyst: Josh Roesner
Fiscal Analysts: Jacqueline Mullen
Noel Benson

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