

## MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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**House Bill 4156 (H-3) as adopted**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Jaime Greene**  
**Committee: Education and Workforce**  
**Complete to 4-17-25**

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

### SUMMARY:

House Bill 4156 would amend the Revised School Code to change the credit requirements within the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The curriculum includes required content areas that students must complete to graduate high school. While the curriculum lists courses that, if successfully completed, constitute fulfillment of a required content area, students can also take courses that integrate content from multiple content standards to meet credit requirements 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. Students would still be required to complete one credit in algebra I and one credit in geometry, and one math course would still have to be completed during the student's final year of high school. However, algebra II would no longer be a required credit. Instead, under the bill, the remaining two credits could be completed by completing any of the following:

- One credit of:
  - Trigonometry
  - Algebra II (no longer a required credit)
  - Precalculus
  - Calculus
  - Applied mathematics
  - Statistics
  - Computer science, though a course in computer science used to meet the math credit requirement could not also be used to meet the science credit requirements contained in section 1278b
- A half credit in:
  - Accounting
  - Business mathematics
  - Construction mathematics
  - Algebra-based physics
  - Algebra-based chemistry
  - Economics with a focus on mathematics
- Up to two credits from:
  - A career and technical education (CTE) program approved by MDE
  - Mathematics courses developed or approved by the board of a school district, intermediate school district (ISD), or public school academy (PSA, commonly referred to as a charter school)

Language referencing alternates to satisfying the mathematics credit related to completion of algebra II would be removed, as algebra II would become an optional course to complete toward the required math credits under the bill.

**Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts**

The bill would retain the one-credit requirement in the arts but would specify courses that would satisfy the requirement. The following could be completed for one credit:

- General music
- Marching band
- Concert band
- Orchestra
- Choral music
- Strings
- Music theory
- Keyboard
- Jazz ensemble
- Wind ensemble
- Choir
- Art
- Visual arts
- Visual studies
- Drawing
- Painting
- Ceramics and pottery
- Design
- Art appreciation
- Illustration
- Computer graphics and design
- Video
- Photography and film
- Art history
- Art criticism
- Fiber arts
- Jewelry
- Yearbook
- Theater
- Graphic design
- Shop
- Culinary studies
- Computer science, although a course in computer science used to meet this credit requirement could not also be used to meet the science credit requirements contained in section 1278b
- A CTE program approved by MDE
- A visual arts course developed or approved by the board of a school district, ISD, or PSA

### **English Language Arts**

The bill would retain the total of four credits in English Language Arts needed for graduation and specify that the following may be taken for one credit toward this requirement:

- English
- Language arts
- Grammar
- Writing
- Poetry
- Literature
- Great books
- Shakespeare
- Dramatic literature
- Business writing
- School newspaper
- Yearbook
- Public speaking
- Debate
- A CTE program approved by MDE

A student could also earn up to four credits from English language arts courses developed or approved by the board of their school district, ISD, or PSA.

### **Science**

For students who entered high school prior to the 2029-2030 academic year, the bill would still require three credits of science for graduation. For students entering high school after the start of the 2029-2030 academic year, the requirement would change to four credits. The revised science credits requirements would consist of completing at least one credit in biology and then another credit in chemistry, earth science, agricultural science, or physics. The final two credits could be earned by taking one credit in one of the following areas:

- Physics
- Chemistry
- Anatomy
- Biology
- Microbiology
- Environmental science
- Geology
- Computer science (with a course in computer science only counting toward one of the content area credit requirements)
- Forensic science
- Agricultural science
- Earth science
- Computer literacy
- Keyboarding
- Computer applications
- Web design
- Programming
- A science course developed or approved by the board of a school district, ISD, or PSA

Students could also earn up to two credits through completion of an MDE-approved formal CTE program.

### **Future Skills**

Beginning with students who enter high school in the 2029-2030 school year, the bill would require one credit in future skills that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by MDE and approved by the State Board of Education to be successfully completed for high school graduation. This credit would be earned by completing a half credit each in personal finance and workplace development.

Presently, the half credit in personal finance must fulfill a half credit of a required math, arts, or foreign language credit, as determined by the board of the school district, ISD, or PSA. The bill would reclassify the personal finance course under the future skills content area.

### **Foreign Language**

The bill would increase, from one credit to two credits, the number of foreign language credits required. It would also allow computer coding to be considered as a language other than English for purposes of meeting the credit requirement.

### **Workplace Development**

Beginning with students entering grade 8 in 2029, the bill would require a half credit to be earned in a workplace development course that counts towards the future skills credit requirement. This course would have to include instruction on at least all of the following:

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

MDE would be responsible for developing subject area content expectations for the workplace development course.

### **Other provisions**

The bill would not require a school to offer all of the listed nonrequired courses that could be used to fulfill their respective content area credit requirements, but the board would have to ensure that a sufficient number of courses are offered so students can complete the credit requirements for that area.

Finally, the bill would establish a June 30, 2028, deadline for MDE to develop or adopt model programs of instruction for all courses described as being part of the credit requirements in sections 1278a and 1278b of the code (which are both included in the bill). These model programs would have to align with the respective subject area content expectations and guidelines developed by MDE and approved by the State Board of Education. These model programs would then be provided to schools, although schools would not be required to adopt or implement them.

MCL 380.1278a and 380.1278b and proposed MCL 380.1278e

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

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

Under the bill, MDE would be required to develop or adopt model programs of instruction for all courses required for high school graduation. MDE has noted that they would require additional staff over multiple years to meet the requirements.

Certain districts, PSAs, and ISDs could realize increased costs if they do not currently offer all of the classes the bill would require for the revised graduation requirements, including a fourth science credit and a future skills credit. Some districts, PSAs, and ISDs may absorb these costs using existing staff time, but others may be required to hire additional staff to offer all of the requisite classes.

However, districts, PSAs, and ISDs could also realize cost savings due to the new flexibility for courses developed or approved by the board of their district, PSA, or ISD to count towards graduation requirements.

## **POSITIONS:**

A representative of the Michigan Council on Economics Education testified in support of the bill. (3-19-25)

The House Builders Association of Michigan indicated support for the bill. (3-26-25)

Representatives of the following entities testified in opposition to the bill (3-19-25):

- Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
- Michigan Music Education Association

The Michigan Department of Education indicated opposition to the bill. (3-19-25)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.