

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based only on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Date: April 14, 1998 Revised: _____

Subject: Education (RAB)

	<u>Analyst</u>	<u>Staff Director</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Action</u>
1.	O'Farrell	O'Farrell	ED	Favorable/CS
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill would also authorize the Commissioner of Education to establish criteria permitting high school students to exempt the reading and mathematics portions of the High School Competency Test and the college placement test if they have successfully demonstrated competency in those areas on the 10th grade Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The law creating the College-Ready Diploma Program would be revised to replace specific high school credit requirements with a grade point average standard for the core courses identified for university admission, and to require a qualifying score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test or on the American College Testing Program.

This bill amends sections 229.57 and 232.2466 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Section 229.57, F.S., requires all 11th grade students in public schools to take a high school competency test that measures minimum performance skills and competencies in reading, writing, and mathematics. The State Board of Education must adopt the skills and competencies that serve as the basis for the test and, upon recommendation of the Commissioner, designate a passing score for each part of the test. A student must pass each part of the test to qualify for a regular high school diploma.

Beginning with the current school year, high school seniors who meet the following criteria qualify for a differentiated college-ready high school diploma:

- Successfully completes the statutory requirements for a standard high school diploma.

- Includes the following courses among those taken to satisfy the 24 credit requirement for graduation:
 - Two credits in algebra and one in geometry, or in equivalent courses identified by the state board,
 - One credit in biology, one credit in chemistry, and one credit in physics, or in equivalent courses identified by the state board, and
 - Two credits in the same foreign language, taken for elective credit.
- Takes the postsecondary education common placement test, or an equivalent test identified by the state board, before graduation and scores at or above the passing score established in each test area.

A student who earns a college-ready diploma is currently entitled to enter a community college certificate or degree program without taking any placement testing. The Department of Education was to have convened a task force of educators and employers to identify additional incentives to encourage students to pursue the college ready diploma.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The legislation under consideration would authorize the Commissioner of Education to establish criteria that would allow students who had successfully demonstrated proficiency in reading and mathematics on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), or by some other measure, to be exempted from taking the corresponding section of the high school competency test or the college placement test when it is administered to high school students. It is believed this change will provide an incentive for students to do well on the FCAT and, correspondingly, reduce the number of students taking the high school competency test.

The criteria a high school student must meet to earn a college-ready high school diploma would be modified. The specific course requirements would be replaced with a more general standard requiring a 3.0 grade point average in high school courses adopted by the Board of Regents and recommended by the State Board of Community Colleges as college-preparatory academic courses. Also, the need to score at or above the statewide passing score on each part of the college placement test would be replaced by a requirement calling for the student to obtain at least the qualifying score for a Florida Merit Scholars award on the SAT or ACT.

The department would be authorized to assign weights to certain courses when calculating grade point averages for determining college-ready diploma eligibility. These courses would include: Advanced Placement, pre-International Baccalaureate, International Baccalaureate, and courses which have been identified by the Articulation Coordinating Committee as containing rigorous content and performance standards. No additional grade point weight could exceed 0.5 per course per semester.

The requirement for the department to convene a task force to identify additional incentives to encourage students to pursue a college-ready diploma would be deleted. No new incentives are proposed in the legislation.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

There may be a slight reduction in test administration costs if the number of students taking the high school competency test decreases due to the proposed exemption option.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
