

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to education; amending s.
3 232.246, F.S.; revising provisions relating to
4 high school graduation credit requirements;
5 providing for early graduation; amending s.
6 236.081, F.S., relating to funds for operation
7 of schools; providing for calculation of
8 full-time-equivalent student membership for
9 students who graduate early; providing an
10 effective date.

11
12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

13
14 Section 1. Subsections (1), (4), and (9) of section
15 232.246, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

16 232.246 General requirements for high school
17 graduation.--

18 (1) Graduation requires successful completion of
19 either ~~a minimum of~~ 24 academic credits in grades 9 through 12
20 or an International Baccalaureate curriculum. Upon meeting
21 either of these requirements, a student may request a diploma
22 pursuant to this section and shall be awarded the diploma upon
23 such request. The student must request the diploma of the
24 district school board prior to the start of the semester in
25 which he or she expects to complete the graduation
26 requirements. The provisions of this section shall not
27 preclude a student who chooses not to request a diploma from
28 remaining in school through the 12th grade and accumulating
29 additional credits. A student who graduates early with 24
30 credits must be at least 16 years old.The 24 credits shall be
31 distributed as follows:

1 (a) Four credits in English, with major concentration
2 in composition and literature.

3 (b) Three credits in mathematics. Effective for
4 students entering the 9th grade in the 1997-1998 school year
5 and thereafter, one of these credits must be Algebra I, a
6 series of courses equivalent to Algebra I, or a higher-level
7 mathematics course.

8 (c) Three credits in science, two of which must have a
9 laboratory component. The State Board of Education may grant
10 an annual waiver of the laboratory requirement to a school
11 district that certifies that its laboratory facilities are
12 inadequate, provided the district submits a capital outlay
13 plan to provide adequate facilities and makes the funding of
14 this plan a priority of the school board.

15 (d) One credit in American history.

16 (e) One credit in world history, including a
17 comparative study of the history, doctrines, and objectives of
18 all major political systems.

19 (f) One-half credit in economics, including a
20 comparative study of the history, doctrines, and objectives of
21 all major economic systems. The Florida Council on Economic
22 Education shall provide technical assistance to the department
23 and local school boards in developing curriculum materials for
24 the study of economics.

25 (g) One-half credit in American government, including
26 study of the Constitution of the United States. For students
27 entering the 9th grade in the 1997-1998 school year and
28 thereafter, the study of Florida government, including study
29 of the State Constitution, the three branches of state
30 government, and municipal and county government, shall be
31 included as part of the required study of American government.

1 (h)1. One credit in practical arts career education or
2 exploratory career education. Any vocational course as
3 defined in s. 228.041(22) may be taken to satisfy the high
4 school graduation requirement for one credit in practical arts
5 or exploratory career education provided in this subparagraph;

6 2. One credit in performing fine arts to be selected
7 from music, dance, drama, painting, or sculpture. A course in
8 any art form, in addition to painting or sculpture, that
9 requires manual dexterity, or a course in speech and debate,
10 may be taken to satisfy the high school graduation requirement
11 for one credit in performing arts pursuant to this
12 subparagraph; or

13 3. One-half credit each in practical arts career
14 education or exploratory career education and performing fine
15 arts, as defined in this paragraph.

16
17 Such credit for practical arts career education or exploratory
18 career education or for performing fine arts shall be made
19 available in the 9th grade, and students shall be scheduled
20 into a 9th grade course as a priority.

21 (i) One-half credit in life management skills to
22 include consumer education, positive emotional development,
23 nutrition, prevention of human immunodeficiency virus
24 infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other
25 sexually transmissible diseases, benefits of sexual abstinence
26 and consequences of teenage pregnancy, information and
27 instruction on breast cancer detection and breast
28 self-examination, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, drug
29 education, and the hazards of smoking. Such credit shall be
30 given for a course to be taken by all students in either the
31 9th or 10th grade.

1 (j) One-half credit in physical education to include
2 assessment, improvement, and maintenance of personal fitness.
3 Participation in an interscholastic sport, ~~whether~~ at the
4 ~~freshman, junior varsity, or varsity level, for two a full~~
5 seasons season, shall satisfy the one-half credit requirement
6 in physical education if the student passes a competency test
7 on personal fitness with a score of "C" or better. A school
8 board may not require that the one-half credit in physical
9 education be taken during the 9th-grade year.

10 (k) Nine elective credits.

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12 School boards may award a maximum of one-half credit in social
13 studies and one-half elective credit for student completion of
14 nonpaid voluntary community or school service work. Students
15 choosing this option must complete a minimum of 75 hours of
16 service in order to earn the one-half credit in either
17 category of instruction. Credit may not be earned for service
18 provided as a result of court action. School boards that
19 approve the award of credit for student volunteer service
20 shall develop guidelines regarding the award of the credit,
21 and school principals are responsible for approving specific
22 volunteer activities. A course designated in the Course Code
23 Directory as grade 9 through grade 12 which is taken below the
24 9th grade may be used to satisfy high school graduation
25 requirements or Florida Academic Scholar's Certificate Program
26 requirements as specified in a district's pupil progression
27 plan.

28 (4)(a) A district school board may require specific
29 courses and programs of study within the ~~minimum~~ credit
30 requirements for high school graduation and shall modify basic
31 courses, as necessary, to assure exceptional students the

1 opportunity to meet the graduation requirements for a standard
2 diploma, using one of the following strategies:

3 1. Assignment of the exceptional student to an
4 exceptional education class for instruction in a basic course
5 with the same student performance standards as those required
6 of nonexceptional students in the district pupil progression
7 plan; or

8 2. Assignment of the exceptional student to a basic
9 education class for instruction which is modified to
10 accommodate the student's exceptionality.

11 (b) The district shall determine which of these
12 strategies to employ based upon an assessment of the student's
13 needs and shall reflect this decision in the student's
14 individual educational plan.

15 (c) Subject to the provisions of subsection (1),
16 district school boards are authorized ~~and encouraged~~ to
17 establish requirements for high school graduation in excess of
18 the minimum requirements by increasing the required academic
19 courses set forth in subsection (1)(a) through (j) and
20 decreasing the number of elective credits proportionately, and
21 by increasing the minimum grade point average requirement;
22 however, an increase in required courses ~~academic credit~~ or
23 minimum grade point average requirements shall not apply to
24 those students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 at the time the
25 district school board increases the requirements. This
26 paragraph does not preclude district school boards from
27 establishing academic credit requirements in excess of 24
28 credits for academy, magnet, or other special courses of study
29 programs which students may voluntarily enter and agree to the
30 excess requirements.

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1 (9) A student who meets all requirements prescribed in
2 subsections (1), (4), and (5) shall be awarded a standard
3 diploma in a form prescribed by the state board. A school
4 board may attach the Florida gold seal vocational endorsement
5 to a standard diploma or, instead of the standard diploma,
6 award differentiated diplomas to those exceeding the
7 prescribed requirements ~~minimums~~. A student who completes the
8 ~~minimum~~ number of credits and other requirements prescribed by
9 subsections (1) and (4), but who is unable to meet the
10 standards of paragraph (5)(a), paragraph (5)(b), or paragraph
11 (5)(c), shall be awarded a certificate of completion in a form
12 prescribed by the state board. However, any student who is
13 otherwise entitled to a certificate of completion may elect to
14 remain in the secondary school either as a full-time student
15 or a part-time student for up to 1 additional year and receive
16 special instruction designed to remedy his or her identified
17 deficiencies. This special instruction shall be funded from
18 the state compensatory education funds of the district.

19 Section 2. Paragraph (q) is added to subsection (1) of
20 section 236.081, Florida Statutes, to read:

21 236.081 Funds for operation of schools.--If the annual
22 allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each
23 district for operation of schools is not determined in the
24 annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing
25 the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as
26 follows:

27 (1) COMPUTATION OF THE BASIC AMOUNT TO BE INCLUDED FOR
28 OPERATION.--The following procedure shall be followed in
29 determining the annual allocation to each district for
30 operation:
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1 (q) Calculation of full-time-equivalent student
2 membership for students who graduate early.--Public schools
3 shall assist any student who is academically qualified and
4 motivated to graduate early from high school. Additional
5 full-time-equivalent student membership shall be calculated
6 for each student who graduates early. A value of 0.25
7 full-time-equivalent student membership shall be calculated
8 for the semester subsequent to the student's graduation for
9 each student who graduates at the end of the first semester of
10 12th grade. A value of 0.50 full-time-equivalent student
11 membership shall be calculated for the school year subsequent
12 to the student's graduation for each student who graduates at
13 the end of 11th grade. The additional full-time-equivalent
14 student membership shall be added to the school district's
15 full-time-equivalent student membership and funded as regular
16 full-time-equivalent students.

17 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1 of the
18 year in which enacted.

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