

STORAGE NAME: h1137.ed

DATE: April 19, 1999

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
ANALYSIS**

BILL #: HB 1137

RELATING TO: Grade Forgiveness Policies

SPONSOR(S): Representative Wasserman Schultz and others

COMPANION BILL(S): SB 2446

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

- (1) EDUCATION K-12 YEAS 9 NAYS 0
 - (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
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I. SUMMARY:

The bill requires that beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, forgiveness policies be limited to replacing a grade of "D" or "F", or their equivalent, with a grade "C" or higher, or its equivalent, earned subsequently in the same or comparable course. It requires that course grades for courses not replaced under the provisions of the forgiveness policy be included in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average (GPA) required for graduation. The bill is intended to prevent students from using grades obtained in electives taken in excess of the required number to replace lower grades obtained in other courses in the calculation of his or her GPA.

This bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on school districts and the state because a more stringent grade forgiveness policy will require some students to take a greater number of courses to meet the 2.0 GPA graduation requirement.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. PRESENT SITUATION:

Courses Required for Graduation

Section s. 232.246(1), F.S., was amended in 1998 (by s. 40, ch. 98-421, L.O.F.), effective July 1, 1999, to read:

- (1) Graduation requires successful completion of either a minimum of 24 academic credits in grades 9 through 12 or an International Baccalaureate curriculum. The 24 credits shall be distributed as follows:
 - (a) Four credits in English.
 - (b) Three credits in mathematics (one of these credits must be Algebra I, a series of courses equivalent to Algebra I, or a higher-level mathematics course).
 - (c) Three credits in science.
 - (d) One credit in American history.
 - (e) One credit in world history.
 - (f) One-half credit in economics.
 - (g) One-half credit in American government.
 - (h) One credit in practical arts career education/exploratory career education/performing fine arts.
 - (i) One-half credit in life management.
 - (j) One credit in physical education.
 - (k) Eight and one-half elective credits.

Graduation Standards

Section 232.246(5), F.S., requires that each district school board establish standards for graduation from its schools, and that the standards include:

- (a) Earning passing scores on the high school competency test.
- (b) Completion of all other applicable requirements prescribed by the district school board pursuant to s. 232.245, F.S.
- (c) Achievement of a cumulative grade point average of 1.5 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, for students entering 9th grade before the 1997-1998 school year; however, these students must earn a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in courses for graduation that are taken after July 1, 1997, or have an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or above.
- (d) Achievement of a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in courses required for graduation, for students entering 9th grade in the 1997-1998 school year and thereafter.
- (e) For purposes of paragraphs (c) and (d):
 1. Each district *must* adopt policies designed to assist students in meeting these requirements. These policies may include, but are not limited to: **forgiveness policies**, summer school attendance, special counseling, volunteer and/or peer tutors, school-sponsored help sessions, homework hotlines, and study skills classes.
 2. At the end of each semester, the parent or guardian of each student in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 who has a cumulative grade point average of less than 0.5 above the cumulative grade point average required for graduation must be notified that the student is at risk of not meeting the requirements for graduation. The notice must contain an explanation of the policies the district has in place to assist the student in meeting the grade point average requirement.

3. Special assistance to obtain a high school equivalency diploma pursuant to s. 229.814, F.S., may be given only when the student has completed all requirements for graduation except the attainment of the required cumulative grade point average.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

The bill requires that beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, forgiveness policies be limited to replacing a grade of "D" or "F", or their equivalent, with a grade "C" or higher, or its equivalent, earned subsequently in the same or comparable course. It requires that course grades not replaced under the provisions of the forgiveness policy be included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA required for graduation.

The bill is intended to prevent students from using grades obtained in electives taken in excess of the required number to replace lower grades obtained in other courses in the calculation of his or her GPA.

C. APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES:

1. Less Government:

- a. Does the bill create, increase or reduce, either directly or indirectly:

- (1) any authority to make rules or adjudicate disputes?

No.

- (2) any new responsibilities, obligations or work for other governmental or private organizations or individuals?

No.

- (3) any entitlement to a government service or benefit?

No.

- b. If an agency or program is eliminated or reduced:

An agency or program is not eliminated or reduced.

- (1) what responsibilities, costs and powers are passed on to another program, agency, level of government, or private entity?

N/A

- (2) what is the cost of such responsibility at the new level/agency?

N/A

- (3) how is the new agency accountable to the people governed?

N/A

2. Lower Taxes:

- a. Does the bill increase anyone's taxes?

No.

b. Does the bill require or authorize an increase in any fees?

No.

c. Does the bill reduce total taxes, both rates and revenues?

No.

d. Does the bill reduce total fees, both rates and revenues?

No.

e. Does the bill authorize any fee or tax increase by any local government?

No.

3. Personal Responsibility:

a. Does the bill reduce or eliminate an entitlement to government services or subsidy?

No.

b. Do the beneficiaries of the legislation directly pay any portion of the cost of implementation and operation?

No.

4. Individual Freedom:

a. Does the bill increase the allowable options of individuals or private organizations/associations to conduct their own affairs?

No.

b. Does the bill prohibit, or create new government interference with, any presently lawful activity?

No.

5. Family Empowerment:

a. If the bill purports to provide services to families or children:

The bill does not purport to provide services to families or children.

(1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

N/A

(2) Who makes the decisions?

N/A

(3) Are private alternatives permitted?

N/A

(4) Are families required to participate in a program?

N/A

(5) Are families penalized for not participating in a program?

N/A

b. Does the bill directly affect the legal rights and obligations between family members?

No.

c. If the bill creates or changes a program providing services to families or children, in which of the following does the bill vest control of the program, either through direct participation or appointment authority:

The bill does not create or change a program providing services to families or children.

(1) parents and guardians?

N/A

(2) service providers?

N/A

(3) government employees/agencies?

N/A

D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:

Section 232.246, F.S., is amended.

E. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

Section 1 revises s. 232.246(5), F.S., to require that beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, forgiveness policies be limited to replacing a grade of "D" or "F", or their equivalent, with a grade "C" or higher, or its equivalent, earned subsequently in the same or comparable course. It requires that course grades not replaced under the provisions of the forgiveness policy be included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA required for graduation.

The section is intended to prevent students from using grades obtained in electives taken in excess of the required number to replace lower grades obtained in other courses in the calculation of his or her GPA.

Section 2 specifies an effective date of July 1, 1999.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

None.

2. Recurring Effects:

There would be an indeterminate cost to the state for additional courses taken by students in order to achieve the GPA required for graduation. A more stringent grade replacement policy will be more costly.

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

None.

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS A WHOLE:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

None.

2. Recurring Effects:

There would be an indeterminate cost to school districts for additional courses taken by students in order to achieve the GPA required for graduation.

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

1. Direct Private Sector Costs:

None.

2. Direct Private Sector Benefits:

None.

3. Effects on Competition, Private Enterprise and Employment Markets:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

See above.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

The bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or take an action requiring the expenditure of funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

The bill does not reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

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C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

The bill does not reduce the percentage or a state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

V. COMMENTS:

None.

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

An amendment clarifying that the bill applies to all courses taken, not just those subject area courses required for graduation, passed without objection.

VII. SIGNATURES:

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