

**STORAGE NAME:** h1191.edk

**DATE:** March 24, 2000

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION K-12  
ANALYSIS**

**BILL #:** HB 1191

**RELATING TO:** High School Grading

**SPONSOR(S):** Representative Kilmer

**TIED BILL(S):** None

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

- (1) EDUCATION K-12
  - (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
  - (3)
  - (4)
  - (5)
- 

**I. SUMMARY:**

HB 1191 requires school boards to report academic achievement of high school students based on statewide assessments, national assessments, and by grades in high school courses. It requires high schools to publish a report of academic achievement measures of high school students, including grade distributions. It also requires high school report cards to separate grades for academic achievement from grades for other factors.

The bill authorizes school districts to use their own judgment in weighting grades for class ranking purposes, but requires that they calculate and report separately the GPA that will determine eligibility for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. It authorizes high school teachers to vary the interpretation of percentage grades according to the difficulty of material and authorizes school districts the option of using the grading scale of percentage equivalents to letter grades.

The bill repeals a requirement that school districts must weight grades the same for dual enrollment courses and advanced placement courses.

There is no fiscal impact to the state associated with this bill. However, school districts may incur additional expense for reprogramming computer systems to meet the new reporting requirements.

The effective date of this bill is July 1, 2000.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. DOES THE BILL SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- |                                   |   |                             |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>Less Government</u>         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. <u>Lower Taxes</u>             | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. <u>Individual Freedom</u>      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. <u>Personal Responsibility</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. <u>Family Empowerment</u>      | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/>            |

For any principle that received a "no" above, please explain:

B. PRESENT SITUATION:

**Annual Public Disclosure Reports**

Section 230.23, F.S., requires school boards to maintain a system of school improvement and education accountability and that includes:

- public disclosure regarding the performance of students and educational programs
- implementation of a system of school reports as required by statute and State Board of Education Rule.

The annual public disclosure reports must be in an easy-to-read report card format and must include the school's student and school performance grade.

**Student Report Cards**

Section 232.24521, F.S., requires each school district to establish and publish policies requiring content and regular issuance of student report cards for all elementary school, middle school, and high school students. The student's academic performance in each class or course must be based upon:

- examinations
- written papers
- class participation
- other academic performance criteria
- student's conduct and behavior
- student's absences and tardiness

A student's final report card for a school year must contain a statement indicating end-of-the-year status with regard to performance or nonperformance at grade level, acceptable and unacceptable behavior and attendance, and promotion or nonpromotion.

Exemptions from academic performance requirements based on practices or policies designed to encourage attendance are prohibited. Despite this prohibition, *The Florida Senate Interim Project Report 00-33* found that some high schools continue to exempt students from required tests if they have perfect attendance and a certain grade. The reasoning supplied is that, if attendance is not the only requirement for the exemption, the policy is not designed to encourage attendance.

### **High School Grading System**

In 1997, the Legislature amended the statewide grading scale (s. 232.2463, F.S.) for all public schools. This grading scale is currently in effect as follows:

- Grade "A" is equivalent to 94-100%
- Grade "B" is equivalent to 85-93%
- Grade "C" is equivalent to 77-84%
- Grade "D" is equivalent to 70-76%
- Grade "F" is equivalent to 0-69%
- Grade "I" is equivalent to 0%

### **Grade Weighting**

In 1995, s. 232.2463, F.S., was amended to provide for the purposes of class ranking, that school districts may exercise a weighted grading system.

In 1998, the Legislature amended s. 240.2263, F.S., to require school districts and community colleges to weight college-level dual enrollment courses the same as honors and advanced placement courses when calculating GPA and to prohibit alternative grade calculation that discriminates against dual enrollment courses.

The rationale behind this requirement was that some schools were not weighting dual enrollment course grades in GPA calculations the same as advanced placement or honors courses. As a result, students were penalized for enrolling and succeeding in college-level courses and favored participation in the AP or the honors programs.

## **C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:**

### **Annual Public Disclosure Reports**

The bill requires school boards to annually report the academic achievement of high school students as measured by the following:

- All statewide assessments
- National assessments
- By grades in high school courses

The grades on high school courses must specify the number and percentage of students who receive each letter grade in all courses, organized by level and category.

### **Student Report Cards**

The bill requires that grades on final report cards be expressed as letter grades or grade points. Effective July 1, 2001, GPAs must be calculated by the grade weighting system adopted by the Department of Education for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. If a different grade weighting system is used to calculate GPAs for class ranking, it must be reported separately from the Bright Futures GPA.

The bill also requires high school report cards to separate academic achievement grades from grades for other matters such as academic improvement, conduct, attitude, attendance, or tardiness.

The bill prohibits the use of a student's attendance record in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement.

### **High School Grading System**

The bill authorizes teachers to use grading systems that vary the interpretation of percentage grades according to the difficulty of material tested.

If teachers do not assign percentage grades, school districts should use a grading scale that is similar to those used by other states, as follows:

- Grade "A" is equivalent to 90-100%
- Grade "B" is equivalent to 80-89%
- Grade "C" is equivalent to 70-70%
- Grade "D" is equivalent to 60-69%
- Grade "F" is equivalent to 0-59%
- Grade "I" is equivalent to 0%

### **Grade Weighting for Dual Enrollment and AP**

The bill repeals s. 240.1163(4), F.S., relating to weighting of college-level dual enrollment the same as honors and advanced placement courses.

According to the Division of Community Colleges, repealing the weighting of the college-level dual enrollment policy could adversely impact the dual enrollment program because students would be discouraged from participating in dual enrollment and would favor participating in AP or honors classes.

#### **D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:**

**Section 1:** Amends s. 230.23, F.S., relating to powers and duties of the school board, to require the profile of each school to include a report of academic achievement for high school students as measured by all statewide assessments, national assessments, and grades in high school courses. Grade reports on high school courses must specify the number and percentage of students who received each letter grade in all courses and in each type of course, organized by level and category.

**Section 2:** Amends s. 232.24521, F.S., relating to report cards, to require grades on the final report cards be expressed as letter grades or grade points, to require effective July 1, 2001, grade point averages to be calculated using the grade weighting system adopted by DOE for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, and to establish that grades for academic achievement should be separated from grades based on factors, such as academic improvement, conduct, attitude, attendance, or tardiness.

**Section 3:** Amends s. 232.2463, F.S., relating to the high school grading system, to authorize school districts to abandon the required grading scale of percentage of equivalents to letter grades, to vary the interpretation of percentage grades according to the difficulty of material tested to exercise a weighted grading system for purposes of class ranking that differs from the system used by DOE for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, and to inform students and their parents of the differences in grading by reporting both grade point averages on student report cards.

**Section 4:** Repeals s. 240.1163(4), F.S., relating to dual enrollment and advanced placement courses, to remove a requirement that dual enrollment and advanced placement courses receive weighted grades.

**Section 5:** Providing an effective date of July 1, 2000

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

According to the DOE, extensive computer reprogramming would be required because report cards are not uniform. School districts may incur the expense of reprogramming all systems.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

See above.

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

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

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

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**B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:**

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

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

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

**V. COMMENTS:**

**A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:**

None.

**B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:**

None.

**C. OTHER COMMENTS:**

None.

**VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:**

None.

**VII. SIGNATURES:**

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION K-12:**

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

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