

STORAGE NAME: h1191s1.edk

DATE: April 13, 2000

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

BILL #: CS/HB 1191

RELATING TO: High School Grading

SPONSOR(S): Committee on Education K-12 and Representative Kilmer & Others

TIED BILL(S): None

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

- (1) EDUCATION K-12 YEAS 8 NAYS 1
 - (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
-

I. SUMMARY:

CS/HB 1191 clarifies requirements relating to annual public disclosure reports. The bill provides that academic achievement be graded upon measurement of academic performance and timely completion of academic requirements and requires school districts to separate grades for academic achievement from grades for other factors. It requires grades reported on the final report card to be expressed as letter grades or grade point averages (GPA's). It prohibits the use of a student's attendance record to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement.

CS/HB 1191 authorizes school districts to use their own judgment in weighting grades for class ranking purposes. It authorizes high school teachers to vary the interpretation of percentage grades according to the difficulty of material and authorizes school districts to use a weighted grading system for purposes of class ranking. When teachers do not assign letter grades, the bill authorizes the school districts to use a 10 point grading scale similar to those used by other states.

There is no fiscal impact to the state associated with this bill.

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 type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" 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 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.

C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Student Report Cards

CS/HB 1191 requires grades on final report cards be expressed as letter grades or grade points.

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.

For the purpose of interpreting percentage grades when teachers do not assign letter 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 70-79%
- Grade "D" is equivalent to 60-69%
- Grade "F" is equivalent to 0-59%
- Grade "I" is equivalent to 0%

D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

Section 1: Amends s. 230.23, F.S., relating to powers and duties of the school board, to require annual public disclosure reports to be a profile of each school in an easy-to-read report card.

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 point averages, to establish that grades for academic achievement should be separated from grades based on factors, such as academic improvement, conduct, attitude, attendance, or tardiness, and to prohibit a student's attendance record from being used to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement.

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 use a 10 point grading scale similar to those used by other states when teachers do not assign letter grades, and to exercise a weighted grading system for purposes of class ranking.

Section 4: 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:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

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.

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:

On April 10, 2000, the Committee on Education K-12 adopted four amendments and made HB 1191 into a committee substitute. The committee substitute differs from the original bill in the following ways:

- Removes the requirement for school districts to use the same weighting adopted by the DOE for courses designated for Bright Futures eligibility in addition to their own weighting system for class ranking,
- Removes the requirement that if a school district uses a weighted system for calculating grades that differs from the system used by the DOE for calculating Bright Futures eligibility, they must inform students and parents of "both" grades on student report cards,
- Removes the repeal of the provision that allows school districts and community colleges to weigh dual-enrollment courses the same as honors and advanced placement courses.
- Removes the requirement for school boards to report academic achievement of high school students based on statewide assessments and national assessments and removes the requirement that grade reports on high school courses must specify the number and

STORAGE NAME: h1191s1.edk

DATE: April 13, 2000

PAGE 6

percentage of students who received each letter grade in all courses and in each type of course, organized by level and category.

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION K-12:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

Elsie J. Rogers

Patricia W. Levesque