

CS/CS/SB 4 — High School Graduation Requirements

by the Policy & Steering Committee on Ways and Means; the Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senators Detert, Thrasher, Wise, Gaetz, Richter, Storms, Peaden, Fasano, Negron, Altman, and Baker

High School Course Requirements

To better prepare students for the global economy, the bill increases the high school graduation requirements, beginning with students entering grade 9 in the following years, to include:

- Geometry for the 2010-2011 school year;
- Biology I for the 2011-2012 school year;
- Algebra II for the 2012-2013 school year;
- Chemistry or physics for the 2013-2014 school year; and
- An additional equally rigorous science course for the 2013-2014 school year.

Assessment Requirements

The bill requires student passage of statewide, standardized end-of-course (EOC) assessments in the following courses for students entering grade 9 in specified school years:

- Algebra I, 2011-2012; and
- Biology I and geometry, 2012-2013.

If additional statewide, standardized end-of-course assessments are developed for other courses, the assessments would count for 30 percent of the student's grade. The bill also provides for the discontinuation of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) for mathematics (Grades 9 and 10) and science (Grade 11), as end-of-course assessments are implemented.

If a student does not pass a statewide, standardized end-of-course assessment, the bill authorizes the use of equivalent scores through other nationally recognized high school achievement tests and industry certification tests in order to meet the assessment requirement.

Acceleration Provisions

The Credit Acceleration Program is created to allow middle school or high school students to earn credit in a high school course, provided that the student attains satisfactory performance on a statewide, standardized end-of-course assessment. Students who have mastered the course material without enrolling in or completing the course may also take the statewide, standardized end-of-course assessment for the purpose of earning credit.

By the 2011-2012 school year, each public high school must offer an International Baccalaureate Program, an Advanced International Certificate of Education Program, or a combination of at least four courses in dual enrollment or Advanced Placement, including one each in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Schools may use virtual courses to meet the requirement, provided that the student can earn college credit through the course, and a

standardized end-of-course assessment, approved by the Department of Education, is administered.

Major Areas of Interest

The bill repeals the requirement for high school students to earn four of eight elective credits in a student-selected area of interest.

Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability Study

The bill directs the Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability to conduct a study of differentiated high school diploma options and endorsements that other states offer, including criteria for awarding the diplomas or endorsements; the differences in courses required for college and career pathways; the advantages and disadvantages of offering a range of diploma options; and any barriers others states have encountered when implementing differentiated diploma options. The report must be submitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than January 31, 2011.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2010.

Vote: Senate 36-1; House 106-12