

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Education Pre-K - 12 Appropriations Committee

BILL: CS/SB 2654

INTRODUCER: Education Pre-K - 12 Committee and Senator Altman

SUBJECT: High School Graduation Requirements

DATE: April 20, 2009 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Carrouth</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>ED</u>	Fav/CS
2.	<u>Armstrong</u>	<u>Hamon</u>	<u>EA</u>	Pre-meeting
3.	_____	_____	<u>WPSC</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Statement of Substantial Changes |
| B. AMENDMENTS..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Significant amendments were recommended |

I. Summary:

The bill is a high school graduation initiative that:

- Requires communication to students about the Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Advanced International Certificate of Education, career academy coursework for industry certification, dual enrollment, and Florida Virtual School courses.
- Establishes new graduation requirements beginning with students entering high school in 2010-2011, including geometry and Biology, and additional requirements beginning with students entering high school in 2012-13, including Algebra II and chemistry or physics;
- Raises the minimum passing scores for the grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) to be set at grade-level proficiency, beginning with the 2011-2012 school year; and
- Authorizes the Commissioner of Education to award a standard high school diploma to honorably discharged veterans of the Vietnam Era who did not complete their graduation requirements.

This bill substantially amends sections 1003.428, 1003.429, 1003.43, 1007.263, 1008.22, and 1009.531, and creates sections 1003.4282 and 1003.4287 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

High School Graduation Requirements

Current high school graduation requirements are established for a 24-credit standard diploma, an accelerated 18-credit college preparatory program standard diploma, and an accelerated 18-credit career preparatory program standard diploma. Sixteen core curriculum credits are currently required for the 24-credit standard diploma. Current graduation requirements include four credits in English, four credits in mathematics, including Algebra I, a series of courses equivalent to Algebra I, or a higher-level mathematics course; three credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component; and three credits in social studies.

Passing Scores for the Grade 10 FCAT

FCAT Achievement Levels are based on both scale scores and developmental scale scores and range from Level 1 (lowest) to Level 5 (highest). The passing scores for the Grade 10 FCAT Reading and Mathematics and retake tests are determined by the SBE. For FCAT Reading, the passing score is a developmental scale score (DSS) of 1926 (scale score of 300) or above and is within the Level 2 FCAT achievement level. For FCAT Mathematics, the passing score is a developmental scale score of 1889 (scale score of 300) or above, which is also within the Level 2 FCAT achievement level.¹ Both of these minimum scores reflect a below-grade level performance.

Honorary High School Diplomas

Section 1003.43, F.S., establishes the general requirements for receiving a standard high school diploma; however, this provision allows the commissioner to award a standard high school diploma to certain veterans who served in World War II and the Korean War, respectively, and were unable to complete their diploma requirements due to their service. To date, the Department of Education has issued 523 diplomas to Korean War veterans.²

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Requirements for High School Graduation

The bill revises the requirements for high school graduation as follows:

Students Entering High School in 2010-2011

Beginning with students entering high school in the 2010-11 school year, graduation from high school with a standard diploma would require, in part:

- Four credits in mathematics to include one credit in Algebra I or in a series of courses equivalent to Algebra I, and one credit in geometry or a series of courses equivalent to geometry; and
- Three credits in science to include one credit in Biology I or in a series of courses equivalent to Biology I, one credit in physical science or a series of courses equivalent to physical sciences, and one credit in a higher-level science course.³

¹ <http://www.fcata.fldoe.org/pdf/fcAchievementLevels.pdf>, Florida Department of Education, FCAT Achievement Levels, July 2008.

² Florida Department of Education, January 26, 2009.

³ These would include rigorous level 3 and 4 courses, but not necessarily at a level higher than Biology and physical science – Email correspondence, Department of Education, April 3, 2009.

Students Entering High School in 2012-2013

Beginning with students entering high school in the 2012-13 school year, graduation from high school with a standard diploma would require, in part:

- Four credits in mathematics to include one credit in Algebra I or in a series of courses equivalent to Algebra I, and one credit in geometry or a series of courses equivalent to geometry, and one credit in Algebra II or in a series of courses equivalent to Algebra II; and
- Three credits in science to include one credit in Biology I or in a series of courses equivalent to Biology I, one credit in chemistry or physics or a series of courses equivalent to chemistry or physics, and one credit in a higher-level science course.⁴

The addition of required mathematics credits higher than Algebra I would align Florida's high school graduation requirements in mathematics with the recommendations of the American Diploma Project.⁵ The American Diploma Project is a joint effort of Achieve⁶ (a partnership between government and business executives), the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation,⁷ and the Education Trust.⁸

The increased level of rigor in required science courses would increase foundational science content in all three branches of the natural sciences for Florida's high school graduates.

Passing Scores for the Grade 10 FCAT

The bill would require the SBE, beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, to specify passing scores for the grade 10 FCAT that meet grade-level proficiency. These provisions would raise the threshold for passing both the math and reading sections of the grade 10 FCAT and could result, in the short term, an increased number of students retaking the FCAT.⁹

In 2008, of the 63,790 grade 10 students failing to pass the Grade 10 FCAT on the first attempt, 37,156 did not pass FCAT Reading, 2,590 did not pass FCAT Mathematics, and 24,044 did not pass both. If the passing score were to be raised to proficiency, 111,868 students would have failed to pass on the first attempt; 57,294 would have failed FCAT Reading, 3,790 would have failed FCAT Mathematics, and 50,784 would have failed both.

In the short term, the graduation rate may also decline.

Honorary High School Diplomas for Vietnam Veterans

This bill authorizes the Commissioner of Education to award a standard high school diploma to honorably discharged veterans who were inducted into the United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam Era before completing their high school graduation requirements. This bill would

⁴ These would include rigorous level 3 and 4 courses, but not necessarily at a level higher than Chemistry or Physics – Email correspondence, Department of Education, April 3, 2009.

⁵ <http://www.achieve.org/ADPNetwork>

⁶ <http://www.achieve.org>

⁷ www.fordhamfoundation.org/

⁸ <http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/about+the+ed+trust>

⁹ <http://www.fcatt.fldoe.org/pdf/fcAchievementLevels.pdf>, Florida Department of Education, FCAT Achievement Levels, July 2008.

afford Vietnam Era servicemembers the same opportunity for a high school diploma as their brethren who served in World War II and the Korean War.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Assessment Costs

According to the Department of Education, with the application of the new FCAT cut score to the 2011-2012 freshman cohort, the first year of the fiscal impact would be in 2013-2014, the junior year of those students in the 2011-2012 cohort.

According to the DOE, there would be a recurring fiscal impact beginning in 2013-2014 of approximately \$1.1 million and is based on the increased number of students to be tested in fall and spring for retake administrations. No additional funds are needed to revise the FCAT passing scores.

Costs for retakes are based on the additional test books needed at \$10 per book. If the passing score is raised to proficiency (Level 3), it is estimated that there would be the need for approximately 75,000 more "books" in the fall and approximately 37,000 more "books" in the spring at \$10 per book, equaling a little more than \$1 million. However, if student proficiency increases with the more rigorous coursework required for graduation, the annual \$1 million would be lower as the need for student retakes is reduced.

Additional Coursework for High School Graduation¹⁰

In order to implement the increased high school graduation course requirements, school districts would either have to reassign currently employed teachers or hire additional teachers. Most likely, school districts will reassign teachers to meet the additional course offerings. Even with the reassignment, there still may be a need to hire as many as 270 additional chemistry-certified teachers to meet the requirements. The chemistry teachers would cost school districts roughly \$12.7 million to \$16.2 million. These costs may be mitigated by an indeterminate amount if school districts and students choose physics in lieu of chemistry to meet the science requirement. However, there may be additional professional development costs as reassigned teachers revise or update their certification credential.

In the less likely event that school districts are unable to reassign teachers, the fiscal impact for hiring new or additional teachers would be much greater.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Education Pre-K-12 on April 16, 2009:

The committee substitute:

- Establishes graduation requirements for a standard diploma to include Algebra I, geometry, Biology, and physical science, beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the 2010-11 school year;
- Establishes additional graduation requirements for a standard diploma to include Algebra II and chemistry or physics for students entering high school in the 2012-13 school year;
- Raises the minimum passing scores for the grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) be set at grade-level proficiency, beginning with the 2011-2012 school year;
- Requires school districts to notify students participating in accelerated high school graduation options of the availability of career academy coursework leading to national industry certification; and
- Authorizes the Commissioner of Education to award a standard high school diploma to honorably discharged veterans of the Vietnam Era who did not complete their graduation requirements.

¹⁰ Senate Education staff fiscal analysis using the 2007-2008 graduation cohort of 193,546.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
