

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

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

Date: April 20, 1998 Revised: _____

Subject: Requirements for the College-Ready Diploma

	<u>Analyst</u>	<u>Staff Director</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Action</u>
1.	Chasteen	O'Farrell	ED	Favorable/CS
2.			WM	
3.				
4.				
5.				

I. Summary:

This committee substitute establishes requirements for the college-ready diploma. Students would be required to take two credits in algebra, one credit in geometry, or higher level mathematics, one credit in biology, one credit in chemistry, and one credit in physics, or their equivalents, as determined by the state board, and two credits in the same foreign language in order to receive the diploma. Students whose native language is not English are exempt from the language requirement if they are able to demonstrate proficiency in the native language. American sign language may be used to satisfy the foreign language requirement. The committee substitute requires that students maintain a 2.0 grade point average in the courses required for graduation in order to receive a college-ready high school diploma. The committee substitute applies to students entering grade 9 in the 1999-2000 school year and thereafter.

This bill creates an unspecified section of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Section 232.246, F.S., prescribes general high school graduation requirements. Students must successfully complete either a minimum of 24 academic credits in grades 9 through 12 or an International Baccalaureate curriculum. The 24 credit hours must be distributed as follows:

4 credits in English, with emphasis in composition and literature;

3 credits in mathematics, with one credit in an Algebra I level course or higher for students entering grade 9 in the 1997-98 school year and thereafter;

3 credits in science, 2 of which must include laboratory components (unless otherwise waived);

1 credit in American history;

1 credit in world history, including the comparative study of major political systems;

½ credit in economics, including the comparative study of major economic systems;

½ credit in American government, including the study of the Constitution of the United States, and for those students entering grade 9 in the 1997-98 school year and thereafter, the study of Florida government, including the State Constitution, the three branches of state government, and municipal and county government;

1 credit in practical arts career education or exploratory career education, or 1 credit in performing fine arts, or ½ credit each in practical arts or exploratory career education and performing fine arts;

½ credit in life management skills;

½ credit in physical education, which can be satisfied by participation in one season of interscholastic sports at the freshman, junior varsity, or varsity level; and

9 elective credits.

School boards may award a maximum of ½ credit in social studies and ½ elective credit for student completion of non-paid voluntary community or school service work.

School districts are required to establish graduation standards which must include a phased-in grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for graduation.

Section 232.2466, F.S., establishes the college-ready diploma program. Beginning with the 1997-98 school year, school districts must award a differentiated college-ready diploma to students who take two credits in algebra, one credit in geometry, one credit in biology, one credit in chemistry, and one credit in physics, or their equivalents as determined by the state board, and who take two credits in a foreign language or American sign language, in addition to meeting the requirements of a standard high school diploma. A student whose native language is not English is exempt from the foreign language requirement if he or she demonstrates proficiency in the native language. Such students must also take the common placement test prescribed in s. 240.117, F.S., or its equivalent and score at or above an established statewide passing score in each test area. A student receiving a college-ready diploma is entitled to admission without placement testing to a public postsecondary program that terminates in a technical certificate, or an associate in science or arts degree. The student must enter the program within two years of graduation from high school. The Department of Education is charged with convening a task force to recommend

additional incentives for pursuit of the college-ready diploma, including awards, recognition, preference for positions in firms, and early registration privileges.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This committee substitute specifies requirements for a college-ready high school diploma. A student must take the following course in order to receive the diploma: two credits in algebra, one credit in geometry, one credit in biology, one credit in chemistry, and one credit in physics, or their equivalents, as determined by the state board, and two credits in the same foreign language. Students whose native language is not English are exempt from the language requirement if they are able to demonstrate proficiency in the native language. American sign language may be used to satisfy the foreign language requirement. The committee substitute requires that students maintain a 2.0 grade point average in the courses required for graduation in order to receive a college-ready high school diploma. The requirements apply to students entering grade 9 in the 1999-2000 school year and thereafter.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

Under current law, the provisions of this committee substitute are similar to s. 232.2466, F.S., regarding the college-ready diploma program. There is at least one bill being considered that amends s. 232.2466, F.S. to specify that courses for the college-ready diploma will be established by the Board of Regents and recommended by the State Board of Community Colleges as college-preparatory academic courses. Passage of both bills could create inconsistent requirements for the college-ready diploma. If only this committee substitute passes, a new section of largely redundant statutory language is created. However, since s. 232.2466, F.S., requires the student to pass the common placement test in order to receive the college-ready diploma, the new language would be inconsistent as well.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.