

**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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education

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BILL: SB 770

INTRODUCER: Senators Hutson and Perry

SUBJECT: Alternative High School Graduation Requirements

DATE: March 18, 2019

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Graf	Sikes	ED	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.			IT	
3.			AP	

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**I. Summary:**

SB 770 provides an alternative means by which a student may earn a standard high school diploma by creating a career and technical education (CTE) graduation pathway option, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year. The bill specifies that:

- A student must meet the following CTE graduation pathway option requirements to earn a standard high school diploma:
  - Successfully complete at least 18 credits in the following areas: 3 credits in English Language Arts (ELA); 3 credits in mathematics, 3 credits in science, 3.5 credits in social studies, 3 credits in CTE, and 2.5 credits in work-based learning program courses. The bill specifies the course and assessment requirements, and industry certification substitutions for mathematics and science credits to fulfill standard high school diploma requirements.
  - Sit for the statewide, standardized Geometry end-of-course (EOC) assessment, Biology I EOC assessment, and United States History EOC assessment.
- A student who completes the CTE graduation pathway option must earn at least a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Each principal, or the principal's faculty designee, must inform parents and students about the CTE graduation pathway option, establish a process by which parents may request student participation in the option, and establish a process for monitoring student progress and discussing the CTE graduation pathway option with certain students.
- Each district school board must incorporate the CTE graduation pathway option in the district's student progression plan.

The bill has no impact on state revenues or expenditures.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.

## II. Present Situation:

Florida law specifies the requirements for earning a standard high school diploma.<sup>1</sup>

### **24-Credit Requirement to Earn a Standard High School Diploma**

To graduate from high school with a standard high school diploma, a student must successfully complete 24 credits or 18 credits, an International Baccalaureate curriculum, or an Advanced International Certificate of Education curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

A student must successfully complete 24 credits in the following subject areas:<sup>3</sup>

- Four credits in English Language Arts (ELA) I, II, III, and IV. A student must pass the statewide, standardized grade 10 ELA assessment, or earn a concordant score, in order to earn a standard high school diploma.
- Four credits in mathematics, including one each in Algebra I and Geometry. A student's performance on the statewide, standardized Algebra I end-of-course (EOC) assessment and Geometry EOC assessment each constitute 30 percent of the student's final course grade. A student must pass the statewide, standardized Algebra I EOC assessment, or earn a comparative score, to earn a standard high school diploma. A student who earns an industry certification for which there is a statewide college credit articulation agreement approved by the State Board of Education (state board or SBE) may substitute the certification for one mathematics credit. Substitution may occur for up to two mathematics credits, except for Algebra I and Geometry.
- Three credits in science, including one credit in Biology I and two credits in equally rigorous courses.<sup>4</sup> The Biology I EOC assessment constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade. A student who earns an industry certification for which there is a statewide college credit articulation agreement approved by the state board may substitute for one science credit, except for Biology I.
- Three credits in social studies, including one credit each in United States History and World History; 0.5 credit in economics, which must include financial literacy; and 0.5 credit in United States Government. The United States History EOC assessment constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade.
- One credit in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or practical arts that incorporates artistic content and techniques of creativity, interpretation, and imagination.
- One credit in physical education that must include the integration of health.
- Eight credits in electives. School districts are required to develop and offer coordinated electives to enable a student to develop knowledge and skills in his or her area of interest and such electives must include opportunities for students to earn college credit, including industry-certified career education programs or series of career-themed courses that result in industry certification or articulate into the award of college credit, or career education courses for which there is a statewide or local articulation agreement and which lead to college credit.

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<sup>1</sup> Sections 1002.3105 and 1002.4282, F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Sections 1002.3105(5) and 1003.4282(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1003.4282(3), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Two of the three required science credits must have a laboratory component. Section 1003.4282(3)(c), F.S.

Florida law specifies that at least 1 of the 24 credits required for earning a standard high school diploma must be completed through online learning.<sup>5</sup> Finally, to earn a standard high school diploma, students must also earn a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.<sup>6</sup>

### **18-Credit Requirement to Earn a Standard High School Diploma**

Students may also earn a standard high school diploma after completing 18 credits under the Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) option.<sup>7</sup> ACCEL options are educational options that provide academically challenging curriculum or accelerated instruction to eligible public school students in kindergarten through grade 12.<sup>8</sup>

At a minimum, each school must offer the following ACCEL options: whole-grade and midyear promotion; subject-matter acceleration; virtual instruction in higher grade level subjects; and the Credit Acceleration Program.<sup>9</sup> Additional ACCEL options may include, but are not limited to, enriched science, technology, engineering, and mathematics coursework; enrichment programs; flexible grouping; advanced academic courses; combined classes; self-paced instruction; rigorous industry certifications that are articulated to college credit and approved in accordance with the law;<sup>10</sup> work-related internships or apprenticeships; curriculum compacting; advanced-content instruction; and telescoping curriculum.<sup>11</sup>

Under the ACCEL option, students need to earn fewer elective credits (i.e., 3 credits in electives instead of the required 8 credits under the 24-credit standard high school diploma pathway) and students are not required to earn one credit in physical education.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, similar to the requirements specified in law for the 24-credit pathway for earning a standard high school diploma, under the ACCEL option, students must earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.<sup>13</sup>

### **Exceptions to the Credit Requirements to Earn a Standard High School Diploma**

An adult student in an adult general education program<sup>14</sup> must be awarded a standard high school diploma if the student meets the specified requirements for the 24-credit pathway or the 18-credit ACCEL option, except that:<sup>15</sup>

- One elective credit may be substituted for the 1 credit requirement in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or practical arts.

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<sup>5</sup> Section 1003.4282(4), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*, (6)(a).

<sup>7</sup> Section 1002.3105(5), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*, at (1)(a).

<sup>9</sup> Section 1002.3105(1)(b), F.S. The Credit Acceleration Program is created to allow a student to earn high school credit in courses required for high school graduation through passage of a statewide, standardized end-of-course (EOC) assessment, an Advanced Placement (AP) Examination, or a College Level Examination Program (CLEP). A school district must award course credit to a student who is not enrolled in the course, or who has not completed the course, if the student attains a passing score on the corresponding EOC assessment, AP Examination, or CLEP. Section 1003.4295(3), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Sections 1003.492 and 1008.44, F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Section 1002.3105(1)(b), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 1002.3105(5), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Sections 1002.3105(5) and 1003.4282(6)(a), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Section 1004.93, F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 1003.4282(6)(b), F.S.

- The requirement that two of the science credits include a laboratory component may be waived by the district school board.
- The one credit in physical education may be substituted with an elective credit.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 770 provides an alternative means by which a student may earn a standard high school diploma by creating a career and technical education (CTE) graduation pathway option, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year. The bill specifies that:

- A student must meet the following CTE graduation pathway option requirements to earn a standard high school diploma:
  - Successfully complete at least 18 credits in the following areas: 3 credits in English Language Arts (ELA); 3 credits in mathematics, 3 credits in science, 3.5 credits in social studies, 3 credits in CTE, and 2.5 credits in work-based learning program courses. The bill specifies the course and assessment requirements, and industry certification substitutions for mathematics and science credits to fulfill standard high school diploma requirements.
  - Sit for the statewide, standardized Geometry end-of-course (EOC) assessment, Biology I EOC assessment, and United States History EOC assessment.
- A student who completes the CTE graduation pathway option must earn at least a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Each principal, or the principal's faculty designee, must inform parents and students about the CTE graduation pathway option, establish a process by which parents may request student participation in the option, and establish a process for monitoring student progress and discussing the CTE graduation pathway option with certain students.
- Each district school board must incorporate the CTE graduation pathway option in the district's student progression plan.

#### **At Least 18-Credit Career and Technical Education Graduation Pathway Option to Earn a Standard High School Diploma**

The bill creates an alternative pathway, as an option, for students to earn a standard high school diploma. The bill specifies that, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, a student is eligible to complete an alternative pathway to earning a standard high school diploma through the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway option.

Receipt of a standard high school diploma awarded through the CTE pathway option requires the student's successful completion of at least 18 credits. The bill specifies that a student completing the CTE pathway option must earn at least a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. This GPA requirement is consistent with the existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements for earning a standard high school diploma.<sup>16</sup>

Under the CTE pathway option, the bill establishes high school credit requirements that are different from the 24-credit and 18-credit options but maintains the assessment requirements which are specified in law. The bill also allows for industry certification substitution for

<sup>16</sup> Section 1002.3105(5) and 1002.4282(6)(a), F.S.

mathematics or science credits if a student earns the industry certifications for which there is a statewide college credit articulation agreement approved by the state board. In 2017-2018, students earned 63,520 certifications for which there are statewide articulation agreements.<sup>17</sup>

The bill specifies that a student must be awarded a standard high school diploma if the student:

- Completes three credits in ELA I, II, and III, which amounts to one less ELA credit than required under the existing 24-credit<sup>18</sup> and 18-credit<sup>19</sup> options for earning a standard high school diploma. The bill also specifies that a student may substitute up to three credits in ELA honors, AP, AICE, IB, or dual enrollment courses for the required ELA credits. The bill maintains the existing ELA assessment requirement by specifying that a student must pass the statewide, standardized grade 10 ELA assessment, or earn a concordant score, to earn a standard high school diploma.
- Completes three credits in mathematics, which amounts to one less mathematics credit than required under the existing 24-credit and 18-credit options for earning a standard high school diploma. However, consistent with the existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements, the bill specifies the following:
  - A student must earn one credit each in Algebra I and Geometry.
  - A student's performance on the statewide, standardized Algebra I EOC assessment and Geometry EOC assessment, each constitute 30 percent of the student's final course grade.
  - A student must pass the statewide, standardized Algebra I EOC assessment, or earn a comparative score, to earn a standard high school diploma.
  - A student who earns an industry certification for which there is a statewide college credit articulation agreement approved by the state board may substitute the certification for one mathematics credit, except for Algebra I and Geometry.
- Completes three credits in science, which is consistent with the existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements for earning a standard high school diploma. Additionally, consistent with the existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements, the bill specifies that:
  - Two of the three required science credits must have a laboratory component.
  - A student must earn one credit in Biology I and two credits in equally rigorous courses.
  - The Biology I EOC assessment constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade.However, in contrast to the existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements, a student who earns an industry certification for which there is a statewide college credit articulation agreement approved by the state board may substitute the certification for two science credits, except for Biology I. The existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements authorize industry certification substitution for one science credit that is not Biology I.<sup>20</sup>
- Completes 3.5 credits in social studies, which is similar to the existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements for earning a standard high school diploma, except for a separate 0.5 credit in financial literacy. Currently, financial literacy is a component of the 0.5 credit in economics.<sup>21</sup> The bill requires that:

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<sup>17</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2019 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis for HB 661*, at 5.

<sup>18</sup> Section 1003.4282(3), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Section 1002.3105(5), F.S.

<sup>20</sup> Sections 1002.3105(5) and 1003.4282(3)(c), F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Section 1003.4282(3)(d), F.S.

- A student must earn one credit each in United States History and World History; 0.5 credit in economics; 0.5 credit in financial literacy; and 0.5 credit in United States Government.
- The United States History EOC assessment constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade.
- Completes three credits in CTE, which is not a specified requirement under the existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements for earning a standard high school diploma. The bill specifies that the courses must result in a program completion and an industry certification.
  - The bill does not specify the number of CTE courses that students must take to complete a program and earn an industry certification, which generates the three credits in CTE. Current law requires the state board to adopt rules to implement the requirements associated with the award of a standard high school diploma.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, the state board has the authority to specify the courses that students may take to complete relevant programs and earn the 3 credits in CTE.
- Completes 2.5 credits in work-based learning programs, which is not a specified requirement under the existing 24-credit and 18-credit requirements for earning a standard high school diploma. The bill specifies that a student must earn 2.5 credits through work-based learning program courses. A student may substitute up to 2.5 credits of electives for work-based learning program courses to fulfill this requirement. The state board may need to modify existing rules to identify work-based learning programs that students may participate in to generate the 2.5 credits toward earning a standard high school diploma.
  - According to the DOE, the CTE frameworks include a variety of courses (contained in the course code directory) that could qualify as work-based learning.<sup>23</sup> In addition to the CTE courses, section 3 of the course code directory<sup>24</sup> includes four Executive Internship courses that could be classified as work-based learning.<sup>25</sup>
- Sits for the statewide, standardized Geometry EOC assessment, Biology EOC assessment, and United States History EOC assessment.

In contrast to the existing 24-credit requirement for earning a standard high school diploma,<sup>26</sup> the CTE graduation pathway option does not require students to:

- Earn:
  - One credit in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or practical arts that incorporates artistic content and techniques of creativity, interpretation, and imagination.
  - One credit in physical education that must include the integration of health.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Section 1003.4282(11), F.S.

<sup>23</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2019 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis for HB 661*, at 4.

<sup>24</sup> The Course Code Directory (CCD) lists all public preK-12 and postsecondary career and technical education courses that are available for use by school districts. Programs and courses that are funded through the Florida Education Finance Program and courses or programs for which students may earn credit toward high school graduation must be listed in the CCD. The CCD maintains course listings for administration and service assignments, K-12 education, exceptional student education, career and technical education, and adult education, with details regarding appropriate teacher certification levels. The CCD provides course information to schools, districts, and the state. Rule 6A-1.09441, F.A.C.

<sup>25</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2019 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis for HB 661*, at 4.

<sup>26</sup> Section 1003.4282(3), F.S.

<sup>27</sup> The Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) option does not require students to earn 1 credit in physical education. Section 1002.3105(5), F.S.

- Eight credits in electives.<sup>28</sup> However, the bill authorizes a student to substitute up to 2.5 credits of electives to fulfill the work-based learning program requirement.
- Complete 1 of the 24 credits through online learning.

The bill also provides requirements for principals and district school boards. Specifically, the bill requires:

- Each principal or the principal's faculty designee, who must be designated as an academic advisor, to:
  - Inform parents and students about the CTE graduation pathway option available at the school and the related requirements.
  - Establish a process by which a parent may request student participation in the CTE graduation pathway option. The student must be provided the opportunity to participate in the CTE graduation pathway option.
  - Establish a process to verify a student's progress and completion of the CTE graduation pathway option.
  - Meet with any student who has a cumulative GPA that falls below 2.0 during the first semester in which his or her GPA falls below 2.0, and any subsequent semester in which his or her GPA remains below 2.0, to discuss CTE pathway options.
- Each district school board to incorporate the CTE graduation pathway option in the district's student progression plan.

The bill promotes career and technical education and training opportunities for high school students, which may prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and credentials to enter the workforce. However, it appears that the credit requirements for the CTE graduation pathway option do not meet the state university admissions requirements. For instance, to be admitted into an undergraduate degree program at a state university in Florida, a first-time-in-college student must have 4 credits in ELA, 4 credits in mathematics (at or above the Algebra I level), and 2 credits in foreign language.<sup>29</sup> The CTE graduation pathway option requires students to complete 3 credits each in ELA and mathematics, and does not specify any credits in electives which could potentially include 2 credits in foreign language. Consequently, if a student who completes the CTE graduation pathway option chooses to pursue higher education at a state university in Florida, the student may need to earn an additional credit each in ELA and mathematics, and two credits in foreign language before applying for admission at a state university. The student may incur costs related to tuition and fees to earn such credits after graduating from high school.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, it is unclear whether the credit requirements for the CTE graduation pathway option meet the academic eligibility requirements of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA specifies the requirements that students must meet to compete in NCAA sports at a Division I or II school.<sup>31</sup> Specifically, for Division I academic eligibility, the NCAA

<sup>28</sup> The ACCEL option requires students to earn 3 credits in electives. Section 1002.3105(5), F.S.

<sup>29</sup> Board of Governors, Regulation 6.002(2)(a).

<sup>30</sup> For advanced and professional, postsecondary vocational, developmental education, and educator preparation institute programs, the standard tuition is \$71.98 per credit hour at a Florida College System institution. Section 1002.23(3)(a), F.S. The resident undergraduate tuition is \$105.07 per credit hour at a state university in Florida. Section 1009.24(4)(a), F.S.

<sup>31</sup> National Collegiate Athletic Association, *Play Division I Sports*, <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/play-division-i-sports> (last visited March 15, 2019); see also National Collegiate Athletic Association, *Play Division II Sports*, <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/play-division-ii-sports> (last visited March 15, 2019).

requires that students graduate from high school and meet all of the following course requirements:<sup>32</sup>

- Complete 16 core courses:
  - Four years of English.
  - Three years of math (Algebra 1 or higher).
  - Two years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it).
  - One additional year of English, math or natural/physical science.
  - Two years of social science.
  - Four additional years of English, math, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy.
- Complete 10 core courses, including 7 in English, math or natural/physical science, before the student's seventh semester. Once a student begins the seventh semester, the student may not repeat or replace any of those 10 courses to improve his or her core-course GPA.

In comparison, for Division II academic eligibility, the NCAA requires that students graduate from high school and meet all of the following course requirements:<sup>33</sup>

- Complete 16 core courses:
  - Three years of English.
  - Two years of math (Algebra 1 or higher).
  - Two years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science if your high school offers it).
  - Three additional years of English, math, or natural/physical science.
  - Two years of social science.
  - Four additional years of English, math, natural or physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

##### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

##### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

##### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

<sup>32</sup> National Collegiate Athletic Association, *Play Division I Sports*, <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/play-division-i-sports> (last visited March 15, 2019).

<sup>33</sup> National Collegiate Athletic Association, *Play Division II Sports*, <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/play-division-ii-sports> (last visited March 15, 2019).



**D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

The bill has no impact on state revenues or expenditures.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

Although the bill requires that a student completing the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway option to earn a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, the criteria for awarding a standard high school diploma under the CTE pathway option does not include the GPA requirement.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 1003.4282 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

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

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.