

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1202

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, April 4, 1997

Title: An act relating to high school credit equivalencies.

Brief Description: Adopting the recommendations of the task force examining high school credit equivalencies.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Dickerson, Poulsen, Smith, O'Brien, Costa, Ogden and Mason.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 4/1/97, 4/4/97 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter, Chair; Finkbeiner, Vice Chair; Goings, Johnson, McAuliffe, Rasmussen and Zarelli.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: At the direction of the Legislature, the State Board of Education establishes minimum high school graduation requirements.

Originally, the board defined one high school credit as 150 hours of instruction or, either five quarter or three semester hours of college or university coursework. Under this system, a high school student, who normally could earn six high school credits annually, could earn up to nine high school credits (at a quarter college, ten at a semester college) annually by attending college full-time.

The board modified the high school credit equivalencies in 1993. It was decided that .75 high school credits were equivalent to either five quarter or three semester hours of college or university coursework. A high school student, who normally could earn six high school credits annually, could earn up to 6.75 high school credits (at a quarter college, 7.5 at a semester college) annually by attending college full-time. The new conversion rate would take effect after September 1, 1997.

In 1994 the Legislature directed the board and the Higher Education Coordinating Board to convene a task force to, among other tasks, recommend high school credit equivalencies by December 1994. The task force was unanimous in its recommendation that the board maintain the definition of one high school credit as either five quarter or three semester hours of college or university coursework. On March 20, 1997, the board revised the applicable code to reflect the task force recommendation regarding equivalencies. The revised administrative code takes effect on or about April 26, 1997.

For community college adult high school completion programs, one high school credit is equivalent to either five quarter or three semester hours of community college coursework.

Summary of Bill: By statute, at the college or university level, five quarter or three semester hours equals one high school credit.

The State Board of Education and Higher Education Coordinating Board task force reporting requirement on high school equivalencies is deleted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The bill supports the recommendations of the task force. The bill is needed to give predictability to students and take responsibility from the board who had not accepted the task force recommendation until the bill was introduced. The Running Start Program serves 8600 students who take one half of their classes at college and are many of our best students.

Testimony Against: The bill is not needed because the board is amending the WAC.

Testified: Representative Quall, prime sponsor; Larry Davis, State Board of Education (pro); Ron Crossland, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (pro).