
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1033

AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND FINANCIAL LITERACY AS PART OF THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes changes in the law governing public high school graduation requirements. By law and unchanged by the bill, the number of credits needed to graduate from high school increases from 20 to 25 beginning with the class of 2023 (i.e., students currently in grade 10). Beginning with the graduating class of 2025 (i.e., students currently in grade 8), the bill incorporates computer science and personal financial management into the 25-credit requirement framework. It also requires local and regional boards of education to provide adequate student support and remedial services that offer alternate means for students to complete these new requirements if they are unable to satisfactorily complete any related coursework or exams.

The bill also (1) expands the information that boards of education and the State Department of Education (SDE) must provide in their biennial reports on high school graduation requirement implementation and (2) makes various technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021, except the provisions allowing students to satisfy the personal financial management requirement by taking several different high school courses take effect July 1, 2022.

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Current law requires nine of the 25 credits required for high school graduation to be completed in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses. Under the bill, beginning with the

graduating class of 2025, the graduation requirements relating to the STEM courses change in various ways relating to the study of computer science and personal financial management.

Computer Science

The bill adds computer science to the STEM course listing in current law. This does not increase the total number of required STEM credits needed to graduate beyond the nine required in current law; however, it presumably requires the subject area to be added to a high school's STEM course offerings in time for the class of 2025 to complete it. The bill does not specify a minimum number of computer science course credits that students must take.

Personal Financial Management

The bill also requires students to complete one credit in personal financial management in order to graduate, which may count towards the nine-credit STEM course requirement. This does not increase the total number of high school credits needed to graduate beyond the 25 required in current law. However, it presumably requires the subject area to be added to a public high school's course offerings in time for the class of 2025 to complete it.

The bill also allows, during the 2021-22 school year only, a local or regional board of education to grant one credit in personal financial management to any student who takes separate courses in grades 9-12 as part of the STEM graduation requirements (see COMMENT). A credit earned in this way (1) may be considered to cumulatively meet the 40-minute class period daily requirement in existing law and (2) must be considered a cross-curricular graduation requirement, so long as a portion of these credits' curriculum corresponds to the personal financial management subject matter.

BIENNIAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS

By law, certain boards of education and SDE must submit biennial reports on the implementation status of heightened high school graduation requirements. Beginning November 1, 2021, the bill requires local and regional boards of education receiving technical

assistance from SDE with the implementation of high school graduation requirements to include in their biennial reports to the department the status of their implementation of the new computer science and personal financial management requirements created by the bill.

Additionally, beginning February 1, 2022, the bill requires SDE's future biennial reports to the Education Committee to include the following information relating to the implementation of the new computer science and personal financial management requirements created by the bill:

1. an explanation of any existing state and federal funds currently available to assist in their implementation,
2. recommendations about additional state funding appropriations to support boards of education in their implementation, and
3. recommendations for any statutory changes that would facilitate their implementation.

COMMENT

Effective Date Issue

The bill requires boards of education to award a credit in personal financial management in the 2021-22 school year to students who satisfy the requirement by completing multiple high school courses. However, this section does not take effect until July 1, 2022, after this school year ends.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33 Nay 5 (03/29/2021)