

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1936

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Higher Education*

Title: An act relating to college and university admission standards.

Brief Description: Allowing high school graduation requirements to satisfy coursework requirements for undergraduate admissions.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Dorn, Ferguson, Jacobsen, Orr, Grant, Roland, Rasmussen, Winsley, Broback and Rayburn.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, March 6, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1936 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 12 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Ogden, Vice Chair; Wood, Ranking Minority Member; May, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Dellwo; Fraser; Ludwig; Miller; Prince; Sheldon; and Spanel.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: By law, the Higher Education Coordinating Board is directed to establish minimum admission standards for the four-year universities and college. The board has adopted those standards. They include a required number of high school courses in six core areas that each high school student must take before the student's freshman year in college. The institutions may require additional courses. The board's standards do not apply to students entering a community college.

The courses required in core areas include four years of English, three years of social studies, two years of a foreign language, and three years of mathematics. Also required are two years of science, with at least one of those a laboratory science, and one year of either a fine, visual or performing art, or a college prep elective from

another core area. Within those core areas, various types of courses are either required or recommended.

In addition to the courses that meet current requirements in each core area, the board has created a process for approving additional courses that will meet the requirements. The board has delegated the responsibility for course approval to the Interinstitutional Committee of Records and Admissions Officers (ICORA). ICORA is in the process of refining its procedure for reviewing high school courses that do not meet current requirements.

The current standards are based on traditional subject matter delivered through traditional methods, e.g. carnegie units. As high school curriculum is reformed, personnel in the K-12 system want to be assured that the procedure for approving high school coursework will be revised to recognize the reformed methods of delivering that coursework. Some of these reforms include interdisciplinary classes, equivalency classes, measuring student competencies, and a curriculum that combines vocational and academic instruction.

Summary of Substitute Bill: By May 15, 1991, the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the superintendent of public instruction will convene a task force. The purpose of the task force is to recommend a process for evaluating and accepting a student's high school coursework for entrance into a college or university.

The six goals of the process are described. They include giving college freshmen a reasonable assurance that their high school coursework has prepared them to succeed in college, and recognizing the changing nature of high school crediting and instruction. The process should also recognize and award appropriate credit for measurable student competencies, and for curriculum and competencies learned in a variety of ways. In addition, the process should achieve decisions in a reasonable amount of time, and, under special circumstances, provide for onsite reviews, and for an appeal process.

By December 20, 1991, the two agencies will report their recommendations to the governor and the House and Senate Higher Education and Education committees. If the agencies are unable to reach agreement on a process, the report may include areas of agreement and disagreement.

The bill declares an emergency and takes effect immediately.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill would require the Higher Education Coordinating Board

to accept any and all coursework in a subject that satisfies high school graduation requirements as meeting the coursework required in a subject for college entrance. Instead, a task force is created to recommend a process for evaluating a student's high school transcript.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: With the encouragement of the Legislature, the governor and the superintendent of public instruction, the curriculum in many high schools is being reformed. Vocational and academic curriculum is being integrated, and schools are encouraged to emphasize interdisciplinary courses and student competencies. Since the current process for evaluating a high school student's transcript is based on traditional methods of educating students, the process needs to be revised to ensure that new instructional methods do not prevent students from entering college. The process for accepting nontraditional high school coursework for college entrance has not always worked expeditiously in the past.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Dorn; Dennis Milliken, Northshore School District; Kathleen Preston, Washington Vocational Association; Thomas Lopp, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Marilyn Baker, Higher Education Coordinating Board.