

MINUTES
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
EHARDT SUBCOMMITTEE**

DATE: Thursday, January 17, 2019
TIME: 9:00 A.M.
PLACE: Room EW41
MEMBERS: Chairman Ehardt, Representatives DeMordaunt, Marshall, Raymond, Boyle, Abernathy
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None
GUESTS: None

Chairman Ehardt called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.

**DOCKET NO.
08-0203-1803:** Continuation of the meeting of January 15, 2019. The prior meeting left off with committee members wanting to review materials from the last session regarding the senior math requirement and the senior project.

Chairman Ehardt asked **Tracie Bent**, Chief Planning and Policy Officer, Office of the State Board of Education (SBE) to address the senior math requirement. Chairman Ehardt indicated both bodies passed the removal of the senior math requirement, if the student already had six credits of math. In response, Tracie Bent, advised the language was not removed as may have been the impression by passing the bill last year. The SBE received feedback from the Governor's office; the negotiated rule making process; and the data on the impact of this requirement. The intent during negotiated rule making and other stakeholder's feedback was to require the students to take four years of math to avoid the need for remedial math, if they pursued higher education. The SBE's decision was based from all of the feedback indicating the need of eight credits and increased minimum content. The SBE plans to readdress the increased math requirements this year following additional feedback that will be gathered from around the state.

Rep. Boyle stated the bill was passed in both bodies of the legislature and it was clearly the intent to remove the need for senior math credits. She said the law can't be overridden. She did not agree with the game playing to get around legislative intent. The SBE had an opportunity to beef up the math requirements in the other three years of high school, while removing the requirement for senior math credits.

Matt Freeman, Executive Director SBE, stated that it is important to recognize the legislation passed and amended last session applied specifically to gifted and talented students. He understood perhaps legislative intent was broader than that, but that has to be a critical part of the conversation in terms of what the SBE was considering. The SBE had a balancing act to consider what the legislation actually did and the recommendation received from the Governor's office.

Tracie Bent, replied that it was not the SBE's intention to disregard what the legislature had directed. The SBE responded to the actual language in the bill and the direction of the recommendation from the Governor's office. Before increasing the requirements in other years the SBE wanted to take more time to weigh the data and public comment. Changes made this year were those changes the SBE had consensus on, as well as the requirement that was explicit in the STEM diploma. The SBE will continue working on the requirements with the school districts and other stakeholder groups.

In response to committee members questions, **Tracie Bent**, stated that the senior math requirement is not explicitly stated in any other section of law. The main section of code that authorizes the SBE to set the graduation requirements is the section of code regarding Uniformity and Thoroughness and is part of the SBEs Constitutional requirement for thoroughness. She also stated the Senate Education Committee did accept the rule January 16, 2019.

Tracie Bent clarified questions of committee members regarding where the intent for the senior math requirements, related to Gifted and Talented students only, is in code. She explained that whenever the code itself does not match a Statement of Purpose then the SBE will always go by the code.

Committee members stated that the title doesn't have anything to do with the language of the code. It is clearly mislabeled as Encouragement of Gifted Students. This section was the only available option to place the code.

Senator Steven Thayn, District 8, testified as sponsor of last year's bill. He said that graduation requirements are found in IDAPA code and typically graduation requirements are not found in statute. The intent was to take it out of code which did not impact the graduation requirements. The bill was intended to allow for discussion. His interpretation is that rules typically follow legislation. The SBE is charged with the responsibility over education unless the legislature defines something. The SBE can then decide what they want to do.

Rep. DeMordaunt made comments trying to clarify and understand **Senator Thayn's** intent as the sponsor of the bill. She asked if his intent was simply to only open discussion between the SBE and the legislature or to specifically direct the SBE through legislation. The House of Representatives passed the legislation almost unanimously based on the Statement of Purpose and bill in front of them last year. Therefore the discussion had been opened, but the SBE landed in a different place than what seems to have passed on the floor of the House based on the information in front of the Members. Senator Thayn stated that he does not know what was presented on the House floor. However, he thought he was clear in his presentation to the House Education Committee. The bill did remove the senior math graduation requirement from code, but not IDAPA rule. He stated that in his perspective, the SBE is acting on what was intended in the bill.

Rep. Boyle referred to and read the Senate and House of Representative's minutes from last year for **Senator Thayn's** benefit since he did not have a copy of them. The Senate minutes indicated Senator Thayn presented the proposed legislation to revise high school graduation requirements. The bill would delete the requirement for students to take a math class in their senior year. An emphasis was placed on the requirement for six semesters of math in high school would remain. Written testimony was provided from two teachers supporting the proposed legislation. When presenting the bill in the House, Senator Thayn indicated the bill would remove the graduation requirement to take a math class during the senior year which is still in administrative rule. The reason for the bill is that many students do not take a math class during their junior year and the attrition of skills between the junior and senior year means the rule may keep some students from graduating.

Rep. Boyle said the minutes are the same as what she recalled. In her opinion the legislature was directing the SBE to remove the senior math graduation requirement. **Senator Thayn** responded by saying that he believes the minutes are accurate. He thought a key component lacking from the minutes is that it was not necessarily demanded that a senior math requirement be removed from IDAPA rule, it was only removed from code.

Rep. Moon was the House floor sponsor of last year's bill. She testified that she did not bring the bill to open dialogue, it was because there was a senior math requirement that she believed should not have been there. Juniors were not taking a math class causing a gap of knowledge for a year. This bill allowed them to take the three year math requirement back-to-back their junior year. This allows students to take other classes their senior year including upper-level math classes in rural areas. She thought it sent a pretty bad message to the public, because the press went out and shared the information causing junior students to be elated that they did not have to take a math class their senior year if they already had their three math classes. She thought it would be a huge disservice and very cumbersome to require a four-year math program for some of the students. There are students that currently believe they do not have to have a senior math class, because it was in all of the papers and discussed in public forums with constituents. She doesn't believe the Legislature passes bills because there is a need to open discussion. She believes that the legislature passes bills because there is a need for those bills. She would like to see this corrected, but doesn't think it needs to be corrected by creating another bill. She thinks the SBE and the rules need to be adapted to what was required by the legislation.

To clarify committee members questions, **Tracie Bent** explained that the current requirement that is codified requires six math credits with two of those credits required in the senior year. The students have options for the senior year math being computer science, engineering, CTE math or any math. The added language is for students that take eight credits which could include credits taken during the middle school year with classes up to algebra II, then those students would not need to take math during their senior year. Additionally, in the codified section there are exemptions for the senior year even if the student has only taken six credits. So, if the student takes six credits and higher level math, then there is also an exemption for the senior math requirement that is already in place.

Rep. Marshall believes that it should be a student's choice to take a senior math class. There is no need to micro-manage the students regarding when they should take their required six credits of math. If remedial math is needed during their pursuit of higher education, that would be the student's choice. He does not believe that it is possible to take six credits of math to get to an advanced placement or a dual-credit calculus class anyway. Those students will be taking at least eight credits of math and most likely math classes during their senior year. Therefore, those students with less math aptitude or interest are being forced to take math during their senior year. It doesn't make sense to him to force the students that pursue vocational trades or choose not to pursue higher education to take the additional credits of math in their senior year. **Tracie Bent** responded by saying data has shown taking a senior math class regardless of the level results in less need for remedial math in upper education. This is also a result of the push for STEM education and having the students prepared for higher education.

Chairman Ehardt put the committee at ease at 10:16 a.m.

Chairman Ehardt resumed the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

Chairman Ehardt advised that procedural advice was being sought and in the meantime the committee would continue to the part of the docket dealing with the amendment to the senior project.

Tracie Bent indicated language was added to the docket to describe more specific intent of what the senior project is intended to cover. Clarifications and common questions were answered in the amendment as well.

In response to committee member's questions, **Tracie Bent** stated the new language provided clarification and allows more flexibility, guidance and intent for the school district to define and provide options to make the senior projects more meaningful to the students.

Rep. Marshall stated he is opposed to the addition of the language requiring senior projects to include all of the following: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Those terms cannot be ignored as part of the senior project as they are included in the language of the docket. Many students and the teachers do not know what is meant by those terms; what they imply; and what they require to complete. We are encouraging districts to ignore the requirements in the language by also saying it is left to the discretion of the school district.

Due to time constraints, **DOCKET NO. 08-0203-1803** will be carried over to the next meeting that would be scheduled at a later date the following week.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

Representative Ehardt
Chair

Shellie Coates
Secretary