

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 4155 College-Level Academic Skills Test

SPONSOR(S): Stargel and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1278

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) K-20 Competitiveness Subcommittee		Valenstein	Ahearn
2) Education Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill repeals the criteria a student in a public postsecondary educational institution must meet in order to obtain an associate in arts or a baccalaureate degree and the waivers associated with those requirements. A student will no longer be required, by law, to achieve a minimum score on a nationally standardized examination or demonstrate successful remediation and achieve a certain grade point average. However, an institution may continue to require similar criteria to ensure a student has met the necessary learning outcomes in accordance with its accreditation process.

In 1986, the Florida Legislature passed a law requiring students to demonstrate mastery of the academic competencies prerequisite to upper-division undergraduate instruction. Students were required to pass the college-level communication and computation skills (CLAST) examination to obtain an associate in arts or a baccalaureate degree.

In 1995, the Legislature created exemptions from the CLAST examination. A student could demonstrate mastery of the required academic competencies by: achieving a certain score on a nationally standardized examination; achieving a certain score on the college placement test and obtaining a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above, on a 4.0 scale, in college-preparatory high school course work; or demonstrating successful remediation of any academic deficiencies and obtaining a cumulative grade point average of 2.5, on a 4.0 scale, in postsecondary-level coursework. The exemption allowing a student to demonstrate mastery of the required academic competencies through a certain score on the college placement test and grade point average in college-preparatory high school courses was eliminated in 1997.

In 2009, due to budgetary concerns, the Legislature repealed the CLAST examination. However, the Legislature maintained the requirements that a student obtain a certain score, to be determined by the State Board of Education, on a nationally standardized examination, or demonstrate successful remediation of any academic deficiencies and achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above, on a 4.0 scale, in certain postsecondary-level coursework to obtain an associate in arts or baccalaureate degree. The Legislature, in addition, authorized a waiver from these provisions under certain circumstances.

The bill does not have a fiscal impact.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2011.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

In 1986, the Florida Legislature passed a law providing that the college-level communication and computation skills (CLAST) examination serve as a mechanism for students to demonstrate mastery of the academic competencies prerequisite to upper-division undergraduate instruction. State college and university students were required to pass the CLAST examination to obtain an associate in arts or a baccalaureate degree.¹

In 1990, the Legislature established a fee to be assessed for the administration of the CLAST examination for students attending a private postsecondary education institution. Students receiving financial aid were not assessed a fee.² In 1997, that policy changed and all students were assessed a fee, regardless of the student's receipt of financial aid.³

In 1995, the law was amended to exempt students from the CLAST requirement if a student could demonstrate mastery of the required academic competencies by achieving a certain score on a nationally standardized examination, by achieving a certain score on the college placement test and obtaining a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above, on a 4.0 scale, in college-preparatory high school course work or by demonstrating successful remediation of any academic deficiencies and obtaining a cumulative grade point average of 2.5, on a 4.0 scale, in postsecondary-level coursework.⁴ The exemption allowing a student to demonstrate mastery of the required academic competencies through a certain score on the college placement test and grade point average in college-preparatory high school courses was eliminated in 1997.⁵

In 2009, due to budgetary concerns, the Legislature eliminated the CLAST examination.⁶ However, the Legislature maintained the requirements that a student obtain a certain score, to be determined by the State Board of Education, on a nationally standardized examination, or demonstrate successful remediation of any academic deficiencies and achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above, on a 4.0 scale, in certain postsecondary-level coursework to obtain an associate in arts or baccalaureate degree. The Legislature, in addition, authorized a waiver of these requirements, under certain circumstances.⁷

The bill repeals the criteria a student in a public postsecondary educational institution must meet to obtain an associate in arts or a baccalaureate degree and the waivers associated with these requirements. A student will no longer be required, by statute, to achieve a minimum score on a nationally standardized examination or demonstrate successful remediation and achieve a certain grade point average. However, an institution may continue to require similar criteria to ensure a student has met the necessary learning outcomes in accordance with its accreditation process.

The bill also repeals the waiver provisions and removes obsolete references to the CLAST examination.

The Board of Governors does not have any issues with the repeal of this section of law.⁸ The Department of Education has suggested a similar repeal in other legislation.⁹

¹ Section 21, ch. 86-145, L.O.F.

² Section 11, ch. 90-99, L.O.F.

³ Section 6, ch. 97-169, L.O.F.

⁴ Section 5, ch. 95-411, L.O.F.

⁵ Section 8, ch. 97-246, L.O.F.

⁶ Section 21, ch. 2009-59, L.O.F.

⁷ Section 1007.25(12), F.S.; *see also* s. 20, 2009-59, L.O.F.

⁸ Email, Board of Governors Staff (March 13, 2011).

⁹ *See* HB 881 and SB 1194, Regular Session 2011.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 1007.25, F.S., deleting requirements relating to earning an associate in arts or a baccalaureate degree.

Section 2. Amends s. 467.009, F.S., deleting provisions relating to the CLAST.

Section 3. Amends s. 1004.04, F.S., deleting provisions relating to the CLAST.

Section 4. Amends s. 1008.30, F.S., deleting provisions relating to the CLAST.

Section 5. Amends s. 1008.38, F.S., deleting provisions relating to the CLAST.

Section 6. Amends s. 1012.56, F.S., deleting provisions relating to the CLAST.

Section 7. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2011.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not require a city or county to expend funds or to take any action requiring the expenditure of funds.

The bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

The bill does not reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Not applicable.