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Rep. Fresen proposes new HS degree, FCAT standards

By Jeff Solocheck

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Rep. Erik Fresen, R-Miami, is proposing new credit and course requirements for Florida high schoolers seeking a diploma. The first-term lawmaker, already vying for a House speakership down the road, has filed proposed legislation (HB61) that lays out more stringently how students must fulfill their credit requirements in math and science.

The four math credits, for example, would have to include Algebra I starting with freshmen in the 2011-12 year. By 2013-14, the math courses would have to include Algebra I and II and geometry "or a series of course equivalent." And for science, two of the three required classes would have to include a lab component. And starting in 2011-12, one of the science classes would have to be Biology I. Two years later, high schoolers would be required to take Biology I, chemistry and a "higher-level science course."

The law also would require that schools advise students about Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and career academy coursework that leads to national industry certification -- plus the availability of dual enrollment classes and the Florida Virtual School. And starting in 2013-14, the Board of Education would have to develop grade 10 passing FCAT scores that must "at a minimum meet grade-level proficiency."

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