

**HOUSE RESOLUTION REGARDING MATHEMATICS
PROFICIENCY AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

2015 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Steve Eliason

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution of the House of Representatives expresses support for a requirement that a Utah high school student be enrolled in, and pass, a mathematics course all four years of high school unless the student demonstrates mathematics proficiency.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ recognizes the need for a highly educated workforce;
- ▶ recognizes the importance of attaining proficiency in mathematics while in high school; and
- ▶ urges the State Board of Education to consider a requirement that a high school student be enrolled in, and pass, a mathematics course all four years of high school unless the student demonstrates mathematics proficiency through completing certain high-level mathematics courses or through testing.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the state of Utah:

WHEREAS, the state of Utah, Governor Gary Herbert, and the business community have indicated that future economic success requires a significant, continued, and focused effort to create a highly educated workforce with the necessary skills for employment;



28 WHEREAS, the Governor has set a goal to have 66% of the state's population between
29 the ages of 25 and 35 achieve a post-secondary degree or certificate by 2020;

30 WHEREAS, a central component of Utah's statewide strategy is to increase degree and
31 certification production in economic areas identified as high-demand and high-wage earning,
32 with an emphasis on science, engineering, and health professions;

33 WHEREAS, this strategy requires significant focus on core academics, primarily
34 mathematics, which prepares students for high-demand, high-wage occupations;

35 WHEREAS, many Utah industries, including technology, manufacturing, healthcare,
36 and engineering are facing a significant shortage of the appropriately skilled, talented workers
37 necessary to meet current industry employment needs;

38 WHEREAS, significant progress toward preparing individuals to meet industry needs in
39 high-demand, high-wage employment sectors requires increasing focus and rigor in critical
40 core academic areas, such as mathematics;

41 WHEREAS, increased focus and rigor in mathematics will provide economic
42 opportunities for Utah's citizens and accelerate Utah's continued economic growth;

43 WHEREAS, the increased rigor of four years of required mathematics for high school
44 students has been identified as a best practice in education;

45 WHEREAS, the states with the top performing schools, such as Massachusetts,
46 Maryland, and Washington, have this requirement;

47 WHEREAS, requiring Utah high school students to demonstrate mathematics
48 proficiency or complete four years of mathematics during high school would not change the net
49 number of hours that students are required to spend in the classroom or the net number of hours
50 that teachers would be required to spend teaching;

51 WHEREAS, given the Utah Constitution's charge that the State Board of Education
52 exercise "general control and supervision," it is appropriate for this issue to be addressed by the
53 board;

54 WHEREAS, exceptions for special education students and other circumstances may be
55 considered when setting such a policy;

56 WHEREAS, Dr. Ruth V. Watkins, PhD, the Senior Vice President for Academic
57 Affairs at the University of Utah, recently said, "One of the most influential actions we can take
58 to strengthen academic preparation and increase college success -- through baccalaureate

59 degree completion -- is to require four years of mathematics during high school. This ensures
60 that students are academically prepared to enter college and successfully complete math course
61 work in their freshman year.";

62 WHEREAS, more than 50% of Utah students entering the higher education system
63 require mathematics remediation and developmental courses at significant cost to both students
64 and taxpayers;

65 WHEREAS, students entering college who require remediation or developmental
66 courses are significantly less likely to graduate;

67 WHEREAS, requiring high school students to demonstrate mathematics proficiency or
68 complete four years of mathematics during high school is one of the most influential policy
69 levers available to strengthen academic preparation and increase college success; and

70 WHEREAS, the House of Representatives of the state of Utah recognizes that there
71 may be a need to address future increased resources necessary for successful implementation:

72 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
73 state of Utah urges the Utah State Board of Education to consider a requirement that a high
74 school student be enrolled in, and pass, a mathematics course all four years of high school
75 unless the student demonstrates mathematics proficiency through completing certain high-level
76 mathematics courses or through testing.

77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the State Board
78 of Education.

Legislative Review Note
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Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel