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## More math, science proposed for prep graduation requirements

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PHOENIX - A proposal to raise high-school math and science graduation requirements has been overwhelmingly endorsed by Arizona educators and business leaders.

High-school seniors currently must complete two math and two science credits to graduate.

Beginning with freshmen in 2008, the proposed requirements would be increased to three math credits.

The mandate would be tougher starting with freshmen in 2009, who would have to take four math and three science credits to graduate.

The state Board of Education met Wednesday to hear public comment on the plan.

State board President and Cochise College President Karen Nicodemus proposed to make the requirements more stringent, making Algebra II (or its equivalent) an essential credit for graduation.

Economics, CTE (career and technology education) or arts courses could be considered alternatives. This would go beyond the Algebra I and geometry currently required.

These courses prepare students for the AIMS math test, which must be passed to graduate.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne, who supports increasing math and science requirements, said he was concerned the additional requirement of Algebra II might lower the graduation rate because of students struggling with Algebra I.

The board also is considering a Regent's Diploma, which would be an alternative pathway that reflects the Arizona Board of Regents' admission-policy requirements, according to the proposal.

A Regent's Diploma would still likely be awarded by the state and would eliminate a required CTE (career and technology education) course.

Flexibility for students with disabilities, English language learners and those who simply are struggling with the requirements are also being considered.

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