AN ACT ***to amend*** 118.33 (1) (a) 1.; and ***to create*** 20.255 (2) (fz) and 115.28 (46) of the statutes; **relating to:** the number of English, mathematics, and science credits required for a high school diploma and making an appropriation.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PREFATORY NOTE: This bill draft was prepared for the Joint Legislative Council's Special Committee on Improving Educational Opportunities in High School.

Under current law, a school board may not grant a high school diploma to any student unless the student has earned all of the following minimum credits in the high school grades: 4 credits of English; 3 credits of social studies; 2 credits of mathematics; 2 credits of science; and one and one−half credits of physical education. Current law also requires the completion of one−half credit of health education in grades 7 to 12 to earn a high school diploma.

This bill draft increases the required credits in mathematics and science to 3 and decreases the required credits in English to 3. In addition, this bill draft creates a grant program and requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to award grants to school districts for the purpose of implementing the increased number of mathematics and science credits.

SECTION 1. 20.255 (2) (schedule) of the statutes: at the appropriate place, insert the following amounts for the purposes indicated:

			2013−14	**2014−15**
20.255				
(2)	AIDS FOR LOCAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING			
(fz)	*Grants for mathematics and science credits*	GPR−A	250,000	250,000

NOTE: This SECTION creates an appropriation schedule entry for grants for mathematics and science credits and appropriates $250,000 during each year of the 2013−15 fiscal biennium.

COMMENT: The committee might consider whether $250,000 per year is an appropriate amount for the grant program. The $250,000 amount in this bill draft was modeled after the $237,200 amount designed for a grant program to support gifted and talented pupils.

SECTION 2. 20.255 (2) (fz) of the statutes is created to read:

20.255 **(2)** (fz) *Grants for mathematics and science credits.* The amounts in the schedule for grants to school districts for mathematics and science credits under s. 115.28 (46).

NOTE: This SECTION creates an appropriation account for the grants for mathematics and science credits.

SECTION 3. 115.28 (46) of the statutes is created to read:

115.28 **(46)** GRANTS FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE CREDITS. From the appropriation under s. 20.255 (2) (fz), award grants to school districts for the purpose of assisting school districts in offering courses that satisfy the number of mathematics and science credits required under s. 118.33 (1) (a) 1.

NOTE: This SECTION requires DPI to award grants to school districts for the purpose of implementing the increased number of mathematics and science credits required under s. 118.33 (1) (a) 1., stats.

COMMENT: The committee might consider whether this SECTION should specify what grant money may be used for or how the money should be distributed.

SECTION 4. 118.33 (1) (a) 1. of the statutes is amended to read:

118.33 **(1)** (a) 1. In the high school grades, at least 4 3 credits of English including writing composition, 3 credits of social studies including state and local government, ~~2~~ 3 credits of mathematics, ~~2~~ 3 credits of science and 1.5 credits of physical education. The school board shall award a pupil a science credit for successfully completing in the high school grades

each course in agriculture that the department has determined qualifies as science according to criteria established by the department.

NOTE: This SECTION increases the number of mathematics and science credits that are required to earn a high school diploma from 2 to 3 and decreases the number of English credits that are required to earn a high school diploma from 4 to 3.

COMMENT: The committee requested that school districts be provided with flexibility in determining which courses qualify as mathematics and science courses. Current law allows a school board to determine that a particular course is the equivalent to a mathematics or science course and thus qualifies as mathematics or science credit for a high school diploma.

A school board may approve equivalent courses in mathematics and science. If a school board wants to have that equivalent course recognized as a state−recognized equivalency, and thus have it recognized by post−secondary institutions, the school board submits the equivalency to the state superintendent for approval as part of the board's graduation policy. An equivalent course contains the time allotment and substantially the same objectives to develop the knowledge, concepts, and skills of the course for which an equivalent is proposed. The state superintendent must approve any high school graduation standards policy that is equivalent to the high school graduation standards in state statute, including the minimum number of credits required to earn a high school diploma. [s. 118.33 (2) (c), stats.; and ss. PI 18.02 (5) and 18.05 (3) and (5), Wis. adm. code.]

DPI has provided guidance to school districts to assist districts in determining what courses qualify as equivalents to mathematics or science courses. For example, a course in technology, engineering, agriculture, family and consumer science, or food science may qualify as an equivalent to a science course, and a course in technology or engineering may qualify as an equivalent to a mathematics course.

The committee might consider whether additional flexibility should be provided to school districts in determining equivalent courses.

(END)