# 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;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Dr. Ruth V. Watkins, PhD, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Utah, recently said, "One of the most influential actions we can take

to strengthen academic preparation and increase college success -- through baccalaureate degree completion -- is to require four years of mathematics during high school. This ensures that students are academically prepared to enter college and successfully complete math course work in their freshman year.";

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

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

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the state of Utah urges the Utah State Board of Education to consider a requirement that a college-bound 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.

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