



AGENDA ITEM

A-3. Project Lead the Way Course Weighting..... Bethany Meighen

Situation: N.C.G.S. 116-11(10a) states that, “the grade point average and class rank shall be calculated by a standard method to be devised by the institutions of higher education.” The University of North Carolina System is charged with determining the weighting of high school courses for purposes of calculating grade point averages. The current weighting for courses is as follows:

- Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge International Examination (CIE), and other college courses, including dual enrollment and North Carolina community college transfer courses from the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement – 5.0 points
- Honors course – 4.5 points
- Standard course – 4.0 points.

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) requests that seven courses, which have been approved by the American Council on Education (ACE) under the ACE National Guide, continue to be designated as 5.0 points weighted courses within the North Carolina high school curriculum. The courses are:

- Civil Engineering and Architecture
- Cybersecurity
- Digital Electronics
- Human Body Systems
- Principles of Biomedical Science
- Medical Interventions
- Principles of Engineering

Background: PLTW is a national nonprofit organization providing PreK-12 students with curricula in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. Through its project- and problem-based instructional model, PLTW fosters hands-on learning, enabling students to master both academic and technical skills. PLTW courses were first introduced in North Carolina during the 2002-03 school year, launching in four school districts. In May 2015, PLTW partnered with the College Board to enhance access and expand college and career readiness opportunities in critical STEM fields. This collaboration enabled students to earn credentials that demonstrated college and career readiness as part of the College Board’s AP program.

Although PLTW has since ended its partnership with the College Board, it continues to strengthen its academic standing. Recently, PLTW submitted seven of its courses for evaluation by the ACE for inclusion in the ACE National Guide. This rigorous review process involved independent teams of faculty subject-matter experts who assessed the courses to determine their equivalency to postsecondary academic credit standards.

Given the rigorous nature of PLTW courses, they are comparable to AP, IB, and CIE courses and should continue to be weighted similarly. The North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges is set to review a related proposal at its February 2025 meeting.

Assessment:

To ensure equitable weighting for all college-level courses, it is proposed that the seven courses submitted by Project Lead the Way (PLTW) maintain the same 5.0-point weight as AP, IB, and CIE courses.

Action:

This item requires a vote by the committee, with a vote by the full Board of Governors through the consent agenda.