

State education board votes to give elective credits for sports

Associated Press

Nov. 20, 2008, 4:03AM

AUSTIN — The State Board of Education gave preliminary approval Wednesday to a measure that would allow high school athletes to get four credits toward their graduation requirement for playing sports for four years.

The measure, approved by a 10-5 vote, was in response to concerns that new requirements that students must take four years of science, math, English and social studies to graduate with a distinguished distinction may deter students from participating in classes that they wouldn't get full credit for.

Board member Geraldine Miller said the measure would be a step backward from the state's 1984 "no pass, no play" law by giving sports the same weight as academics.

"This is completely dismantling the reform movement of 1984 and I truly regret that," she said, shortly before the board voted. "I never thought I'd live this long ... to see this happen."

Several high school coaches testified before the board, stressing the importance of athletics in student achievement.

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