

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2000

Title: *An act relating to the certificate of mastery.*

Brief Description: *Requiring the state-wide high school assessment system to assess for three types of certificates of mastery.*

Sponsors: *Representative B. Thomas.*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: *February 27, 1997.*

Bill Analysis Prepared by: *Pat Shelledy (786-7149).*

Background: In 1993, the Legislature passed an education reform act. That act emphasizes performance based education and assessment. The performance based system is being designed and gradually implemented but is supposed to be fully operational by the year 2000. The Washington Commission on Student Learning was assigned the tasks of identifying the knowledge and skills that all public school students need to know and developing a student assessment system. The assessment system must be designed so that educators can use the results to evaluate instructional practices, and to initiate appropriate educational support for students who have not mastered essential academic learning requirements.

Assessments measuring the essential academic learning requirements of certain goals of the education reform act are to be implemented at various times, some in 1996-97 and others in 1998-99. Before 2000-2001, school districts may participate on a voluntary basis. After that, participation in the assessment system is mandatory. The development of those assessments has been delayed.

After the State Board of Education has determined that the high school assessment system has been implemented and that it is sufficiently reliable, successful completion of the high school assessment leads to a certificate of mastery. It is anticipated that most students will obtain the certificate of mastery by age 16. The certificate of mastery is evidence that the student has mastered the essential academic learning requirements. The certificate of mastery will be required to graduate. The commission must make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding the relationship between the certificate of mastery and other high school graduation requirements. Upon obtaining the certificate of mastery, the school must make additional education opportunities available for the student that emphasize integration of academic and vocational education.

The law governing the commission and implementation of education reform and certificates of mastery is scheduled to expire on September 1, 1998.

The State Board of Education has authority to establish high school graduation requirements

Summary of Bill: The assessment system developed for high school students must include assessments for three certificates of mastery: academic, general, and applied.

Academic certificates: A student must have advanced competency in and conceptual knowledge of the basics (reading, writing, communication, mathematics) and extensive knowledge and competence in science, civics, history, geography, a foreign language, health, fitness, and the arts. The academic certificate will be required for all students graduating after June 30, 2002, to gain admission into a public institution of higher education. The assessment leading to academic certificates must be implemented in the 2000-01 school year.

General certificates: A student must have demonstrated progressive competency in the basics and knowledge and competency in science, civics, history, geography, health, fitness, and the arts. A foreign language is not required. The general certificate will be required for all students graduating after June 30, 2003, to gain admission into a public community or technical college. The assessments for general certificates must be implemented in the 2001-02 school year.

Applied certificates: A student must have competency in the basics and a working general understanding of science, civics, history, geography, health, fitness, and the arts. The assessment must be implemented in the 2002-03 school year.

A student must obtain an applied certificate to graduate. The level of mastery must be displayed on diplomas and transcripts. The assessments leading to the certificates must be offered initially to students at about age 16. Students may take the assessment up to twice a year.

The commission must continue to make recommendations about the relationship between the certificates of mastery and high school graduation requirements. The state board may issue guidelines for high school graduation requirements but they are not controlling. Instead, individual school districts must establish high school graduation requirements.

School districts must participate in the assessment system prior to the school year 2000-2001.

The provision governing the implementation of the assessment system will expire June 30, 1999.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 19, 1997.

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*