

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2848

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to the assessment of student learning.

Brief Description: Defining the state's science and tenth grade assessment.

Sponsors: Representatives Talcott, B. Thomas, Johnson, L. Thomas, Robertson, Lambert, Carrell, Bush, Backlund, Pennington, Lisk, McDonald, Zellinsky, Mielke, Radcliff, D. Schmidt, Cairnes, Sterk, D. Sommers, Sheahan, Carlson, Chandler, Smith, Boldt and Thompson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/29/98, 2/3/98 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Johnson, Chairman; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Quall; Smith; Sterk; Sump and Talcott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Hickel, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Linville and Veloria.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background: On September 30, 1997, the Washington Commission on Student Learning (CSL), State Board of Education (SBE), and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) presented a statutorily required report on the Certificate of Mastery to the House and Senate Education Committees. Most of the recommendations in the report reflected the work of the CSL's Certificate of Mastery Ad Hoc Committee. The CSL and SBE added some recommendations to those of the ad hoc committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CERTIFICATE OF MASTERY AD HOC COMMITTEE:

- A comprehensive plan for continuous professional development for all educators should be implemented.

- The implementation plan for the Certificate of Mastery should include a number of components. The components cover: voluntary participation in the 10th grade assessment in 1999; a timeline for implementing the Certificate of Mastery in 1998, in order to give students adequate notice of the new graduation requirements; and a three step approach to implementation. The recommended steps are described:

In step one, students graduating in 2006 should be the first group required to earn a Certificate of Mastery as a requirement of high school graduation.

In step two, students should be given an opportunity to earn state-level endorsements in content areas that are not included in the initial assessments. These endorsements should be posted on students' official transcripts.

In step three, the content areas that comprise the Certificate of Mastery should be reviewed on a biennial cycle. The biennial review identified in step three should examine a number of content and assessment issues. Some of those issues are described in the report.

- Future advisory groups working on the Certificate of Mastery should build flexibility into the assessment system. The ad hoc committee recommended several areas of flexibility for students. Students should have multiple opportunities to pass the assessment. They should be permitted to retake subsections of the assessment without taking the entire test. However, once a student passes the assessment, the student should not be able to take it again. The ad hoc committee also described other areas in which flexibility should be considered.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON STUDENT LEARNING:

The CSL added three recommendations to those of the ad hoc committee. The commission recommended that science be phased in as an additional requirement with the class of 2008. The CSL also recommended that the biennial review process consider the feasibility of including classroom based assessments as part of the Certificate of Mastery. Finally, the commission reiterated its recommendation that private and home schooled students should not be required to earn a Certificate of Mastery.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

The SBE added five recommendations to those of the ad hoc committee. In one of the recommendations, the board suggested that it be given statutory responsibility for the biennial review process and for approving all aspects of the Certificate of Mastery. The SBE also recommended that more discussion and investigation occur before final decisions are made distinguishing requirements for the Certificate of Mastery and a high school diploma.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS:

The OSPI's requirement to have science assessments available for middle and high school students is delayed from the 1998-99 school year to the 1999-2000 school year. Language is removed that suggests that science assessment will be available unless the Legislature takes action to delay or prevent the assessment system and essential academic learning requirements.

HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS:

By September 1, 2002, the SBE will determine whether the high school assessment system developed by the CSL has been implemented and whether it is reliable and valid. If the SBE determines that the assessments meet those requirements, then:

- Beginning with the graduating class of 2006, successful completion of the reading, writing, communications-listening, and mathematics assessments will meet the requirements for a Certificate of Academic Proficiency (CAP).
- Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students must successfully complete the science assessment as well as the assessments above to meet the requirements of the CAP.

Students must achieve a certificate of academic proficiency to graduate from high school. School districts may establish additional graduation requirements as well. The requirements may include, but are not limited to community service, senior projects, student portfolios, and classroom-based assessments.

Each student's official transcript will include information on whether the student met the requirements of the CAP, the highest scores attained in each subject area, and the dates on which the student took the assessments. If a student fails to meet the assessment standard in any content area, the student may retake the assessment at no expense to the student. If a student meets all content area standards but wishes to improve a score in a particular content area, the student may retake the assessment at his or her own expense.

CAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

By September 1, 1999, SPI will convene an advisory committee on the CAP. The committee, which will consist of no more than 15 people, will report to the SBE. Some of the interests that advisory committee members will represent are described. The committee may examine a variety of issues that affect the certificate of academic

proficiency. These issues include, but are not limited to required content areas, endorsement policies, standards, and the logistics of implementation.

The advisory committee will conduct pilot studies to improve, and possibly expand the CAP. The purposes of the pilot studies are described. Beginning no later than September 1, 2000, the SBE will report to the House and Senate Education Committees annually on the findings and recommendations of the advisory committee. Members of the committee may receive statutorily limited per diem and mileage allowances.

OPTIONS FOR HOME SCHOOLED AND PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Home schooled students and students enrolled in private schools are not required to meet the requirements of the CAP. Home schooled students and students enrolled in private schools are not required to meet the requirements of the CAP as a condition of entering a public college or university.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS:

Middle, junior high, and high schools that use educational pathways shall ensure that all pathways will provide students with access to any courses and instruction needed to meet entrance requirements for baccalaureate institutions. Students must be permitted to enter the educational pathways of their choice.

Before a student is accepted into an educational pathway, the school will provide the student's parent with information about the pathway. If students or their parents are not satisfied with the opportunities available through a selected pathway, the students must be permitted to transfer to any other pathway provided in the school. Schools are not permitted to develop educational pathways that retain students in high school beyond the date that the students are eligible to graduate. In addition, schools are not permitted to require students who transfer between pathways to complete pathway requirements beyond the date that the students are eligible to graduate.

EXISTING STATUTORY LANGUAGE REMOVED:

Statutory language is removed that required a report to the Legislature on high school assessments by September 30, 1997. The name of the certificate of mastery is changed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The date of the science assessment is moved forward by one year, the name of the basic academic requirement is changed to the certificate of academic proficiency, existing language on education pathways is restored and protections are added for students enrolled in pathways. Language on achievement of a certificate of academic proficiency at about age 16 is restored and language on the dates of the high school assessments are clarified so that the first high school assessments impacting graduation requirements will occur for the graduating class

of 2006. The science assessment will be added for the graduating class of 2008. Assessment language on students retaking unpassed assessments is clarified to say that the students may retake an assessment at no cost to the student. Finally, the advisory committee on the CAP will report to the SBE and the SBE will report to the House and Senate Education Committees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Washington is moving from an educational system that awards high school diplomas based on seat time to a performance-based system. A number of issues surrounding the assessments used in this new system need to be resolved. Many students, parents, and other interested people are unsure about how the assessment system will be used, which content areas will be measured, and how those areas will affect a student's ability to obtain a high school diploma. We can't wait any longer to let students know about the new requirements, timelines and options for meeting those requirements, and the consequences that adhere to failing to meet the new standards for each assessment. The name of the Certificate of Mastery is controversial and needs to be changed. The scores that a student achieves on an assessment need to be recorded on the student's transcript.

Testimony Against: (original bill) Existing statutory language on educational pathways and achievement of a Certificate of Mastery at about age 16 should be restored. Students who meet the standard in content areas should not be permitted to retake that assessment. A student's transcript should not include information on assessment scores or dates since students learn at different rates and this assessment is not intended to replace the SAT. Certain dates should be clarified, including the date on which the science assessment will be available. The CAP advisory committee should report to the SBE and the SBE should report to the Legislature.

Testified: Representative Talcott, prime sponsor; Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public Instruction (support with concerns); Marlene Hoylater, Commission on Student Learning (support with concerns); Steve Mullin, Washington Roundtable (support with concerns); Jerry Jenkins, Selah School District (support with concerns); Lynn Nixon, Hewlett-Packard (support); Bruce McBurney, Washington Vocational Association (concerns); Mike Riley, American Cancer Society (con); Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (con); Tim Stensager, Franklin Pierce Schools (concerns); and Larry Davis and Neal Supplee, State Board of Education (pro).