

Education

HB 1380

Brief Description: *Changing the timelines for the science and social studies academic assessments.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Quall, Talcott, Haigh and Cox; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Delaying timelines for the voluntary and required use of the science and social studies Washington assessments of student learning.*

Hearing Date: *2/5/01*

Staff: *Susan Morrissey (786-7111).*

Background:

By law, Washington's public school students must take standardized tests in a number of different subjects at various points in the students' educational careers. During elementary, middle school, and high school, the students are tested to determine whether they are meeting the state's learning standards for students at those grade levels. Tests in reading, writing, mathematics and listening have already been developed and administered on either a voluntary or required basis for students in the fourth, seventh and tenth grades. By this Spring, most students in those three grades must be tested in those subjects. In the future, students in elementary, middle school, and high school will also be tested in science, social studies, the arts, and health and fitness.

The timelines for the voluntary and required administration of all the tests are determined by law. The grade level at which a student will be tested is determined by rule. The tests

will be used to ascertain whether the schools that the students attend are helping the students to meet the state's learning standards, also called the essential academic learning requirements. The tests will also be used to determine whether students are allowed to graduate from a public high school.

Social studies tests will be available for voluntary use by schools in the 2002-03 school year. The first required administration of the tests is in the 2005-06 school year.

Tests in the arts and health and fitness will be available for voluntary administration during the 2003-04 school year. The test must be administered to middle and high school students during the 2006-07 school year. The tests must be administered to elementary school students during the 2007-08 school year.

Under current law, science tests were to be available for voluntary use in middle and high schools during the 1999-00 school year. The administration of the tests was required during the 2000-01 school year. Science tests must be available for use in elementary schools by the 2001-02 school year. The tests must be administered in the 2004-05 school year.

Last spring, schools pilot tested the science assessments. During the summer, staff from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reviewed the results of the pilot tests and found a number of problems with the assessments. The analysis revealed that many of the questions were too difficult, that too much of the tests were comprised of science facts, and that too little of the tests assessed scientific inquiry and basic science concepts. In addition, some of scenarios included in assessments didn't work well. As a result, the OSPI discussed the results of the tests and the office's subsequent analysis with its national technical advisory committee. The Superintendent and the technical review committee concluded that the state needed more time to develop appropriate test items. Subsequently, OSPI first convened a group of national experts, followed by state science content committees, to revise the testing specifications and to work with contractors to prepare a bank of questions that will cover the next five years of science assessments. In addition, the Superintendent announced her intention to ask the Legislature to delay the statutory timelines for the administration of the science assessments.

Summary of Bill:

The statutory timelines for the voluntary and required administration of the science and social studies assessments of student learning are revised.

The timelines for administration of the science assessments in middle and high school are delayed for two years. The assessment must be available for voluntary use in the 2001-02 school year and for first required use in the 2003-04 school year.

The timeline for the voluntary use of the elementary school science assessment is delayed

by one year, to the 2003-03 school year. The first required administration of the science assessment remains unchanged.

The timeline for the administration of the social studies assessment in middle school is delayed for one year. The middle school assessment must be available for voluntary use in the 2003-04 school year and for first required use in the 2006-07 school year.

The timeline for the administration of the social studies assessment in high school is delayed for two years. The high school assessment must be available for voluntary use in the 2004-05 school year and for first required use in the 2007-08 school year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2001.

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