

---

SENATE BILL 6117

---

State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Senators Hochstatter and Stevens

Read first time 02/23/2001. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring that assessments measuring the  
2 essential academic learning requirements be proven to be valid measures  
3 of basic academics before they are mandatory; and amending RCW  
4 28A.655.060.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.655.060 and 1999 c 373 s 501 are each amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 (1) The Washington commission on student learning is hereby  
9 established. The primary purposes of the commission are to identify  
10 the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be  
11 able to do based on the student learning goals in RCW 28A.150.210, to  
12 develop student assessment and school accountability systems, to review  
13 current school district data reporting requirements and make  
14 recommendations on what data is necessary for the purposes of  
15 accountability and meeting state information needs, and to take other  
16 steps necessary to develop a performance-based education system. The  
17 commission shall include three members of the state board of education,  
18 three members appointed by the governor before July 1, 1992, and five  
19 members appointed no later than June 1, 1993, by the governor elected

1 in the November 1992 election. The governor shall appoint a chair from  
2 the commission members, and fill any vacancies in gubernatorial  
3 appointments that may occur. The state board of education shall fill  
4 any vacancies of state board of education appointments that may occur.  
5 In making the appointments, educators, business leaders, and parents  
6 shall be represented, and nominations from statewide education,  
7 business, and parent organizations shall be requested. Efforts shall  
8 be made to ensure that the commission reflects the racial and ethnic  
9 diversity of the state's K-12 student population and that the major  
10 geographic regions in the state are represented. Appointees shall be  
11 qualified individuals who are supportive of educational restructuring,  
12 who have a positive record of service, and who will devote sufficient  
13 time to the responsibilities of the commission to ensure that the  
14 objectives of the commission are achieved.

15 (2) The commission shall establish advisory committees. Membership  
16 of the advisory committees shall include, but not necessarily be  
17 limited to, professionals from the office of the superintendent of  
18 public instruction and the state board of education, and other state  
19 and local educational practitioners and student assessment specialists.

20 (3) The commission, with the assistance of the advisory committees,  
21 shall:

22 (a) Develop essential academic learning requirements based on the  
23 student learning goals in RCW 28A.150.210. Essential academic learning  
24 requirements shall be developed, to the extent possible, for each of  
25 the student learning goals in RCW 28A.150.210. Goals one and two shall  
26 be considered primary. Essential academic learning requirements for  
27 RCW 28A.150.210(1), goal one, and the mathematics component of RCW  
28 28A.150.210(2), goal two, shall be completed no later than March 1,  
29 1995. Essential academic learning requirements that incorporate the  
30 remainder of RCW 28A.150.210 (2), (3), and (4), goals two, three, and  
31 four, shall be completed no later than March 1, 1996. To the maximum  
32 extent possible, the commission shall integrate goal four and the  
33 knowledge and skill areas in the other goals in the development of the  
34 essential academic learning requirements;

35 (b)(i) The commission and superintendent of public instruction  
36 shall develop a statewide academic assessment system for use in the  
37 elementary, middle, and high school years designed to determine if each  
38 student has learned the essential academic learning requirements  
39 identified in (a) of this subsection. The academic assessment system

1 shall include a variety of assessment methods, including criterion-  
2 referenced and performance-based measures. Performance standards for  
3 determining if a student has successfully completed an assessment shall  
4 be determined by the commission and the superintendent of public  
5 instruction in consultation with the advisory committees required in  
6 subsection (2) of this section.

7 (ii) The assessment system shall be designed so that the results  
8 under the assessment system are used by educators as tools to evaluate  
9 instructional practices, and to initiate appropriate educational  
10 support for students who have not learned the essential academic  
11 learning requirements at the appropriate periods in the student's  
12 educational development.

13 (iii) Assessments measuring the essential academic learning  
14 requirements shall be available for voluntary use by school districts  
15 and shall be required to be administered by school districts according  
16 to the following schedule unless the legislature takes action to delay  
17 or prevent implementation of the assessment system and essential  
18 academic learning requirements. However, the assessments shall be  
19 postponed until it is proven through scientific research that the  
20 assessments are a reliable and valid measure of basic academics.

	<b>Assessments available for voluntary use (School years)</b>	<b>Assessments required to be administered (School years)</b>
<b>Reading, Writing, Communication, Mathematics</b>		
- Elementary school	1996-97	1997-98
- Middle school	1997-98	2000-01
- High school	1998-99	2000-01
<b>Science</b>		
- Middle and high school	1999-00	2000-01
- Elementary school	2001-02	2004-05
<b>Social Studies</b>		
- Elementary, middle, and high school	2002-03	2005-06
<b>Arts</b>		

1	- Middle and high	2003-04	2006-07
2	school		
3	- Elementary school	2003-04	2007-08
4	<b>Health, Fitness</b>		
5	- Middle and high	2003-04	2006-07
6	school		
7	- Elementary school	2003-04	2007-08

8 The completed assessments and assessments still in development  
9 shall be transferred by the commission on student learning to the  
10 superintendent of public instruction by June 30, 1999.

11 (iv) To the maximum extent possible, the commission and the  
12 superintendent of public instruction shall integrate knowledge and  
13 skill areas in development of the assessments.

14 Assessments for goals three and four of RCW 28A.150.210 shall be  
15 integrated in the essential academic learning requirements and  
16 assessments for goals one and two.

17 (v) The commission on student learning may modify the essential  
18 academic learning requirements and the assessments, as needed, before  
19 June 30, 1999. The superintendent of public instruction may modify the  
20 essential academic learning requirements and the assessments, as  
21 needed, after June 30, 1999. The commission and superintendent shall,  
22 upon request, provide opportunities for the education committees of the  
23 house of representatives and the senate to review the assessments and  
24 proposed modifications to the essential academic learning requirements  
25 before the modifications are adopted.

26 (vi) The commission and the superintendent of public instruction  
27 shall develop assessments that are directly related to the essential  
28 academic learning requirements, and are not biased toward persons with  
29 different learning styles, racial or ethnic backgrounds, or on the  
30 basis of gender;

31 (c) After a determination is made by the state board of education  
32 that the high school assessment system has been implemented and that it  
33 is sufficiently reliable and valid, successful completion of the high  
34 school assessment shall lead to a certificate of mastery. The  
35 certificate of mastery shall be obtained by most students at about the  
36 age of sixteen, and is evidence that the student has successfully  
37 mastered the essential academic learning requirements during his or her  
38 educational career. The certificate of mastery shall be required for

1 graduation but shall not be the only requirement for graduation. The  
2 commission shall make recommendations to the state board of education  
3 regarding the relationship between the certificate of mastery and high  
4 school graduation requirements. Upon achieving the certificate of  
5 mastery, schools shall provide students with the opportunity to pursue  
6 career and educational objectives through educational pathways that  
7 emphasize integration of academic and vocational education.  
8 Educational pathways may include, but are not limited to, programs such  
9 as work-based learning, school-to-work transition, tech prep,  
10 vocational-technical education, running start, and preparation for  
11 technical college, community college, or university education. Any  
12 middle school, junior high school, or high school using educational  
13 pathways shall ensure that all participating students will continue to  
14 have access to the courses and instruction necessary to meet admission  
15 requirements at baccalaureate institutions. Students shall be allowed  
16 to enter the educational pathway of their choice. Before accepting a  
17 student into an educational pathway, the school shall inform the  
18 student's parent of the pathway chosen, the opportunities available to  
19 the student through the pathway, and the career objectives the student  
20 will have exposure to while pursuing the pathway. Parents and students  
21 dissatisfied with the opportunities available through the selected  
22 educational pathway shall be provided with the opportunity to transfer  
23 the student to any other pathway provided in the school. Schools may  
24 not develop educational pathways that retain students in high school  
25 beyond the date they are eligible to graduate, and may not require  
26 students who transfer between pathways to complete pathway requirements  
27 beyond the date the student is eligible to graduate;

28 (d) Consider methods to address the unique needs of special  
29 education students when developing the assessments in (b) and (c) of  
30 this subsection;

31 (e) Consider methods to address the unique needs of highly capable  
32 students when developing the assessments in (b) and (c) of this  
33 subsection;

34 (f) Develop recommendations on the time, support, and resources,  
35 including technical assistance, needed by schools and school districts  
36 to help students achieve the essential academic learning requirements.  
37 These recommendations shall include an estimate for the legislature,  
38 superintendent of public instruction, and governor on the expected cost  
39 of implementing the academic assessment system;

1 (g) Develop recommendations for consideration by the higher  
2 education coordinating board for adopting college and university  
3 entrance requirements for public school students that are consistent  
4 with the essential academic learning requirements and the certificate  
5 of mastery;

6 (h) Review current school district data reporting requirements for  
7 the purposes of accountability and meeting state information needs.  
8 The commission on student learning shall report recommendations to the  
9 joint select committee on education restructuring by September 15,  
10 1996, on:

11 (i) What data is necessary to compare how school districts are  
12 performing before the essential academic learning requirements and the  
13 assessment system are implemented with how school districts are  
14 performing after the essential academic learning requirements and the  
15 assessment system are implemented; and

16 (ii) What data is necessary pertaining to school district reports  
17 under the accountability systems developed by the commission on student  
18 learning under this section;

19 (i) Recommend to the legislature, governor, state board of  
20 education, and superintendent of public instruction:

21 (i) A statewide accountability system to monitor and evaluate  
22 accurately and fairly at elementary, middle, and high schools the level  
23 of learning occurring in individual schools and school districts with  
24 regard to the goals included in RCW 28A.150.210 (1) through (4). The  
25 accountability system must assess each school individually against its  
26 own baseline, schools with similar characteristics, and schools  
27 statewide. The system shall include school-site, school district, and  
28 state-level accountability reports;

29 (ii) A school assistance program to help schools and school  
30 districts that are having difficulty helping students meet the  
31 essential academic learning requirements as measured by performance on  
32 the elementary, middle school, and high school assessments;

33 (iii) A system to intervene in schools and school districts in  
34 which significant numbers of students persistently fail to learn the  
35 essential academic learning requirements or meet the standards  
36 established for the elementary, middle school, and high school  
37 assessments; and

38 (iv) An awards program to provide incentives to school staff to  
39 help their students learn the essential academic learning requirements,

1 with each school being assessed individually against its own baseline,  
2 schools with similar characteristics, and the statewide average.  
3 Incentives shall be based on the rate of percentage change of students  
4 achieving the essential academic learning requirements and progress on  
5 meeting the statewide average. School staff shall determine how the  
6 awards will be spent.

7 The commission shall make recommendations regarding a statewide  
8 accountability system for reading in grades kindergarten through four  
9 by November 1, 1997. Recommendations for an accountability system in  
10 the other subject areas and grade levels shall be made no later than  
11 June 30, 1999;

12 (j) Report annually by December 1st to the legislature, the  
13 governor, the superintendent of public instruction, and the state board  
14 of education on the progress, findings, and recommendations of the  
15 commission; and

16 (k) Make recommendations to the legislature and take other actions  
17 necessary or desirable to help students meet the student learning  
18 goals.

19 (4) The commission shall coordinate its activities with the state  
20 board of education and the office of the superintendent of public  
21 instruction.

22 (5) The commission shall seek advice broadly from the public and  
23 all interested educational organizations in the conduct of its work,  
24 including holding periodic regional public hearings.

25 (6) The commission shall select an entity to provide staff support  
26 and the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall  
27 provide administrative oversight and be the fiscal agent for the  
28 commission. The commission may direct the office of the superintendent  
29 of public instruction to enter into subcontracts, within the  
30 commission's resources, with school districts, teachers, higher  
31 education faculty, state agencies, business organizations, and other  
32 individuals and organizations to assist the commission in its  
33 deliberations.

34 (7) Members of the commission shall be reimbursed for travel  
35 expenses as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

36 (8)(a) By September 30, 1997, the commission on student learning,  
37 the state board of education, and the superintendent of public  
38 instruction shall jointly present recommendations to the education  
39 committees of the house of representatives and the senate regarding the

1 high school assessments, the certificate of mastery, and high school  
2 graduation requirements.

3 In preparing recommendations, the commission on student learning  
4 shall convene an ad hoc working group to address questions, including:

5 (i) What type of document shall be used to identify student  
6 performance and achievement and how will the document be described?

7 (ii) Should the students be required to pass the high school  
8 assessments in all skill and content areas, or only in select skill and  
9 content areas, to graduate?

10 (iii) How will the criteria for establishing the standards for  
11 passing scores on the assessments be determined?

12 (iv) What timeline should be used in phasing-in the assessments as  
13 a graduation requirement?

14 (v) What options may be used in demonstrating how the results of  
15 the assessments will be displayed in a way that is meaningful to  
16 students, parents, institutions of higher education, and potential  
17 employers?

18 (vi) Are there other or additional methods by which the assessments  
19 could be used to identify achievement such as endorsements, standards  
20 of proficiency, merit badges, or levels of achievement?

21 (vii) Should the assessments and certificate of mastery be used to  
22 satisfy college or university entrance criteria for public school  
23 students? If yes, how should these methods be phased-in?

24 (b) The ad hoc working group shall report its recommendations to  
25 the commission on student learning, the state board of education, and  
26 the superintendent of public instruction by June 15, 1997. The  
27 commission shall report the ad hoc working group's recommendations to  
28 the education committees of the house of representatives and senate by  
29 July 15, 1997. Final recommendations of the commission on student  
30 learning, the state board of education, and the superintendent of  
31 public instruction shall be presented to the education committees of  
32 the house of representatives and the senate by September 30, 1997.

33 (9) The Washington commission on student learning shall expire on  
34 June 30, 1999.

--- END ---