

FINAL BILL REPORT

3ESHB 2195

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding state assessment standards.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives McDermott, Talcott, Quall, Tom and Haigh).

House Committee on Education
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Education

Background:

Washington Assessment of Student Learning - High School Graduation Requirements

By law, sometime in the future, students will be required to obtain a Certificate of Mastery in order to graduate from high school. The achievement of the certificate will be based on the successful completion of the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The WASL, when fully implemented, will include a number of content areas: reading, writing, communications (listening), mathematics, social studies, the arts, and health and fitness. The State Board of Education (SBE) is required to determine whether the high school assessment system has been implemented and whether it is sufficiently reliable and valid. Once the SBE makes that determination, successful completion of the high school WASL will lead to a Certificate of Mastery.

On January 12, 2000, the SBE adopted a rule that requires students in the graduating class of 2008 to successfully complete the WASL in reading, writing, communications, and mathematics in order to receive a high school diploma. Passage of the science WASL will be required for the graduating class of 2010.

The SBE delayed any decisions on requiring successful completion of the social studies, arts, and health and fitness assessments for graduation. The SBE has indicated that passage of the social studies WASL may be required for graduation or may lead to an endorsement on the student's transcript. The SBE has also indicated that passage of the arts and the health and fitness WASLs may lead to an endorsement on the student's transcript.

The SBE will continue to monitor the implementation of the WASL in order to determine its reliability and validity. It may delay its requirements if it finds that the system does not meet the SBE's interpretation of the legal, policy, or technical definitions of validity and reliability.

State Board of Education - High School Graduation Requirements

By law, the SBE is responsible for determining the state's minimum high school graduation requirements. The SBE adopted new graduation requirements in October 2000. The requirements will take effect for the graduating class of 2008.

Under the new requirements, each student must earn at least 19 academic credits. Any subject for which essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) have been adopted must include material on those requirements plus any additional material beyond the standards that was developed by the district. In addition to the credit requirements, two new non-credit requirements are established. Each student will complete a culminating project that allows the student to demonstrate competency in goals Three and Four of education reform. In addition, students must have an education plan for high school and the year following graduation.

Washington Assessment of Student Learning - Implementation Responsibilities

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is responsible for creating, updating, and reporting on the EALRs and the WASL. The Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) is responsible for determining the score that students must achieve to successfully complete the assessment.

Summary:

Certificate of Academic Achievement

Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, public school students who pass the high school WASL in reading, writing, and mathematics will receive a Certificate of Academic Achievement, formerly called the Certificate of Mastery. Science is added to the certificate in 2010. Students may achieve a Certificate of Academic Achievement through success on the tenth grade WASL, through success on a retake of the content areas in which a student was initially unsuccessful, or through an approved alternative means.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, the Certificate of Academic Achievement will be required for graduation from a public high school. The requirement does not apply to some special education students, students enrolled in private schools, or students who are home-schooled.

Special education students for whom the high school WASL is inappropriate, even with accommodations, may complete other measures included in the students' individualized instruction plans and earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement.

Limited English proficient students will have the same opportunities to obtain a certificate as other high school students. In addition, the OSPI and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) will develop a plan to provide these students with continuing education options in the community colleges when college is more of an age-appropriate option than remaining in high school.

Each fifth grade and eighth through twelfth grade student who fails to successfully complete the WASL in one or more of the content areas included in the certificate will have a plan that

includes the steps the student needs to take to stay on track for graduation. The plan will be shared with parents.

Students who are subject to the requirement will have at least four opportunities in high school to retake the WASL in the content areas in which they were unsuccessful. Students in high school completion programs in the community and technical colleges will also have access to four retake opportunities. In addition to retakes, students who have been unsuccessful in a required area may use an approved alternative means, developed by the OSPI, to demonstrate achievement of the state standards. The evidence students use for the alternative means must be comparable in rigor to the WASL and must be approved by the Legislature prior to implementation.

Students may retain and use the highest result they get for each content area of the high school WASL. Students who are successful but who wish to retake the WASL to improve their results must pay for the test, using a uniform cost developed by OSPI. Students who are unsuccessful may retake the WASL in that content area without charge up to four times in high school and four times in a community or technical college high school completion program.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2006, the highest level and score that a student achieves in each content area will be displayed on the student's transcript. In addition, a student will receive a scholar's recognition on the transcript if the student exceeds the state standards at level four. The award of a Certificate of Academic Achievement or Certificate of Individual Achievement will be also be acknowledged on the student's transcript. The transcript will also indicate if a student passed the WASL using an alternative means.

A series of actions and reports on various aspects of the high school assessment system are required of four state education agencies during 2004. The requirements include reports on alternative means, continuing education options for students with limited English proficiency, information on the validity and reliability of the high school assessment system, and the proficiency levels required of students for success on the high school WASL. In addition, by October 1, 2010, the OSPI will report to the Legislature and the A+ Commission on the effect of the certificate requirements on dropout rates.

Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Assessments

By September 1, 2004, the OSPI will report to the legislative education committees with assessment options and other strategies to ensure continued support and attention to the essential academic learning requirements in social studies, the arts, and health and fitness.

By the end of the 2008-09 school year, school districts will have in place assessments or other strategies to ensure that students have an opportunity to learn the essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) in social studies, the arts, and health and fitness in elementary, middle, and high school. The districts will annually submit implementation verification reports to the OSPI on the use of those assessments or strategies.

The OSPI will review and prioritize the EALRs and identify which EALRs and grade level content expectations will be included on the WASL and used for accountability purposes. The review will result in more focus, with an emphasis of depth over breadth. The content expectations will be sequenced, logical, build with increasing depth, and reflect the sequential nature of the discipline.

By September 2006, WASL results for reading and math will be reported in a way that allows parents and teachers to see the academic gain a student has made from one year to the next.

In order to help parents and teachers provide support to students, the OSPI will provide as much individual student information as possible within the constraints of the assessment system's item bank. The OSPI will also make available to teachers a collection of diagnostic tools that may be used to evaluate the academic status of individual students.

The OSPI will post on its website model assessments and lists of resources in social studies, the arts, and health and fitness.

Subject to available funding, the OSPI will report to the Governor, the SBE, and the legislative education committees with the results of an independent study of the alignment of the state standards and assessments in reading, writing, and science. The agency will also report on its review and revision of the state standards in each content area. A timeline for the reports is included.

The existing statute on EARLs and assessments is repealed and most of the operative language is included in the act. Timelines for mandatory assessments in reading, writing, mathematics, and science are included. Timelines for mandatory state level assessments in social studies, the arts, and health and fitness are not included, but a date is adopted by which assessments or other strategies must be in place for those subjects.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	95	2	
Senate	47	0	(Senate amended)
House	92	2	(House concurred)

Effective: March 18, 2004