

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2902

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to allowing student scores in mathematics on certain national tests as one of multiple measures for state standards for mathematics.

Brief Description: Allowing certain national tests as multiple measures for mathematics.

Sponsors: Representatives Talcott, Quall, O'Brien, Cox, P. Sullivan, Curtis, Hunter, Morrell, Roach, Holmquist, Woods, Shabro, Walsh, Ericksen, Condotta, Anderson, McDonald, Serben, Nixon, Jarrett, Haler, Armstrong, McCune, Haigh, Sump, Priest, Tom, Simpson, Hinkle, Strow, Newhouse and Rodne.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/23/06, 2/1/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows a student's mathematics scores on various college placement exams to be used as an objective alternative assessment to demonstrate the student has met the mathematics standards required for graduation.
- Requires the State Board of Education to submit the proposed scores to the Legislature for formal approval through legislation or concurrent resolution.
- Subject to funds being appropriated for this purpose, requires school districts to reimburse students if they take the tests in order to use them as an alternative assessment.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Santos, Shabro, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, most students will be required to obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) in order to graduate from a public high school in the state. Students must attain the proficient level in reading, writing, and mathematics on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) to earn a CAA. Science will be added in 2010.

In 2004, the Legislature authorized the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop options for one or more objective alternative assessments for high school graduation instead of relying on the WASL. The alternatives must be objective and comparable in rigor to the knowledge and skills assessed by the WASL. To use an alternative, a student must take the WASL at least twice. Implementation of an alternative assessment for actual use must be formally approved by the Legislature.

According to SPI's feasibility study for the alternative assessments, several states with high school exit examinations similar to Washington permit students to use a substitute exam. North Carolina, Idaho, and Florida each permit scores on the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) to be used as an alternative to the state exam. North Carolina also permits scores from other college entrance or college placement tests to be used as an alternative assessment, such as the Preliminary SAT (PSAT), COMPASS, or ACCUPLACER.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A student's score on the mathematics portion of the PSAT, SAT, ACT, or the ACT programs PLAN or WorkKeys can be used as an objective alternative assessment for demonstrating that the student has met the mathematics standards for high school graduation. The State Board of Education (SBE) identifies the scores students must achieve on these tests to meet the state standard for mathematics.

The SBE must submit the proposed scores to the Legislature for formal approval through legislation or concurrent resolution. Subject to funds being appropriated for this purpose, school districts reimburse students for testing costs if they take the tests as an alternative assessment.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Two additional testing products are added: ACT programs PLAN or WorkKeys. The SBE must submit the proposed scores to the Legislature for formal approval. If funds are provided, school districts reimburse students for the costs of taking the tests as an alternative assessment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 2, 2006.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support) The math WASL is a hurdle for students. We should use a measure that is already accepted by colleges and teachers. College entrance and placement exams are comparable nationwide and using them has been shown to increase enrollment in Advanced Placement in other states. This would dilute criticism about the unique nature of the WASL math exam. The math WASL should be about math, not English. Many of the proposals under consideration would weaken standards, but not this one. There are legitimate criticisms about the WASL. These tests are objective and provide better information about student performance.

(With concerns) We should examine what the cut scores would be before adopting this approach as an alternative.

Testimony Against: Not everyone is prepared to take a college math placement test. This is too high of an expectation for students.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Talcott, prime sponsor; Harold Sumerfield; Don Anderson; and Scott Brittain, Rogers High School, Puyallup.

(With concerns) Delight Roberts, Seattle School District.

(Opposed) Susan Edgerton.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.