
Education Committee

HB 2923

Brief Description: Adopting a weighted multiple measures approach to graduation requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Sells, Appleton, Ericks, McCoy, Chase and Conway.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the requirement that students, beginning with the class of 2008, obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement for high school graduation.
- Requires students to achieve a minimum threshold performance of 65 percent on the overall high school assessment system for graduation.
- Specifies the components and weights of the assessment system. Grade point average in state and locally required courses counts for 70 percent; the high school and beyond plan, culminating project, and scores on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning each count for 10 percent.
- Directs the State Board of Education to create a weighted graduation model where higher achievement on one of the components offsets lower achievement on another.

Hearing Date: 1/23/06

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

High school graduation requirements are established by the State Board of Education (SBE), by local school districts, and in state statute.

SBE Requirements: The statewide minimum graduation requirements from the SBE are:

1. Accumulate 19 credits in the following course content areas:
 - English - 3 credits
 - Math - 2 credits
 - Science - 2 credits, including 1 credit of laboratory science
 - Social Studies - 2.5 credits
 - Health and Fitness - 2 credits
 - Arts (visual or performing) - 1 credit
 - Occupational Education - 1 credit

- Electives - 5.5 credits
2. Complete an education plan for their high school experience, including what they expect to do the year following graduation (the high school and beyond plan).
 3. Complete a culminating project where the student demonstrates both learning competencies and preparation related to Basic Education Goal 3 (Analytical Thinking) and Goal 4 (School to Work).

Local Requirements: In addition to specifying how the high school and beyond plan and culminating project are conducted, school districts can adopt additional courses or other requirements for high school graduation.

Statutory Requirements: Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, most students will also be required to obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) to obtain a diploma. Students must meet the state standards 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. Special education students who are not appropriately assessed by the WASL earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) by fulfilling the requirements of their individualized education plan.

In 2004, the Legislature authorized the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop alternative assessments for high school students to demonstrate they meet the state academic standards instead of relying on the WASL for this purpose. To use an alternative, a student must take the WASL at least twice. The Legislature must formally approve implementation of any alternative assessment.

WASL scores are categorized into four levels: Level 1 (below basic), Level 2 (basic), Level 3 (proficient), and Level 4 (advanced). Beginning with the class of 2006, a student's transcript must display the highest WASL score and proficiency level for each content area.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that students must obtain a CAA or CIA for high school graduation is eliminated.

Beginning with the class of 2008, students must achieve an average threshold value of 65 percent in relation to their overall performance on the five components of a high school assessment system to obtain a diploma. Each of the five components is specified and assigned a weight on a 100 point scale within the system, as follows:

1. Grade point average for courses required by the SBE for high school graduation (35 percent weight). Students must also attain at least a passing grade in each required course;
2. Grade point average for courses required locally for graduation (35 percent weight);
3. Completion of the high school and beyond plan (10 percent weight);
4. Completion of the culminating project (10 percent weight); and
5. Student scores on the high school WASL or alternative assessment (10 percent weight). Students must attain at least a Level 1 on each of the required content areas.

Each component, except the WASL scores, is evaluated using a four-point scale, using guidelines developed by the SBE. The SBE also develops guidelines for allocating points for WASL

scores. To calculate the minimum threshold value for graduation, the SBE creates a weighted graduation model where higher achievement on one component offsets lower achievement on another.

The requirement that student transcripts display the highest WASL scores is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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