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**Education Committee**

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**SSB 5638**

**Brief Description:** Changing student assessment provisions.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Rasmussen and Poulsen).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to pilot two or more alternative assessments during the 2005-06 school year and to develop an appeals process no later than the 2007-08 school year.
- Removes the requirement for legislative approval of alternative assessments and any appeals process.
- Requires high schools to notify students and parents, in the primary language of the parents to the extent practicable, of a student's options under the high school assessment system and of the different courses and programs in career and technical education, including those available in skill centers.

**Hearing Date:** 3/23/05

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

**Background:**

Under current law, beginning with the graduating class of the 2008, students must acquire a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) in order to earn a high school diploma, though it is not the only requirement for a high school diploma. The CAA is evidence that a student has met state academic standards in reading, writing, and mathematics on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Beginning in 2010, science will be added as a required content area.

A student may also demonstrate achievement of state academic standards on one or more objective alternative assessments once these alternative assessments are approved by the Legislature. The alternatives may include an appeals process. A student must retake the high school WASL at least once to use the objective alternative assessment in order to earn a CAA. If a student demonstrates achievement of state academic standards using an objective alternative assessment, the student will earn a CAA. The student's high school transcript will note whether

the student earned the certificate via the high school WASL or via an objective alternative assessment.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must pilot two or more alternative assessments in the 2005-06 school year, with the goal of implementing at least one in the 2006-07 school year. The agency must consult with a list of stakeholders in the piloting, development and implementation of the alternatives. The rigor of the content areas assessed on the alternative assessments must be equivalent rather than comparable to the knowledge and skills assessed on the WASL. Once alternative assessments have been deemed adequate by the OSPI, school districts must offer them to students.

The requirement for legislative approval of the alternatives is removed and replaced with language that directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide the education committees of the Legislature with an opportunity to review alternative assessment options for students prior to their implementation. The agency must provide this review opportunity by January 15 of the school year before the school year planned for implementation.

The OSPI must put an appeals process in place for use by students no later than the 2007-08 school year. The criteria for appeals must have the ability to be consistently applied throughout the state. The requirement that the Legislature approve the appeals process is removed. The appeals process is added to the list of components of the high school assessment system.

New language is added to clarify the permission that students have in current law to combine content area results from the WASL with results from alternative assessments to demonstrate achievement of state academic standards. The results may be combined as long as the student achieves at the proficient level or above in each content area.

Beginning in the 2005-06 school year, each public school must notify students and parents, in the primary language of the parents to the extent practicable, of the options under the high school assessment system for students to demonstrate achievement of state standards.

Students and parents must also be notified, in the primary language of the parents to the extent practicable, of the different courses and programs in career and technical education, including those offered at skills centers that provide students with the knowledge and skills in the content areas assessed on the high school assessment system and included in the CAA.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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