

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1987

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, March 25, 2005
Ways & Means, April 1, 2005

Title: An act relating to alternative assessments.

Brief Description: Regarding alternative assessments.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Priest, Ormsby, Curtis and Anderson).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/10/05, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 3/23/05, 3/25/05 [DPA-WM].

Ways & Means: 3/31/05, 4/1/05 [DPA(EKHE)].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Pflug, Rasmussen, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Brian Jeffries (786-7422)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Fairley, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: Under current law, beginning with the graduating class of the 2008, students must acquire a Certificate of Academic Achievement in order to earn a high school diploma, though it is not the only requirement for a high school diploma. The Certificate of Academic Achievement 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). A student may also demonstrate achievement of state academic standards on one or more objective alternative assessments if these alternative assessments are approved by the Legislature. The content areas assessed on the objective alternative assessments must be comparable in rigor to the knowledge and skills assessed on the high school WASL. If a

student demonstrates achievement of state academic standards using an objective alternative assessment, the student would earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement.

Summary of Amended Bill: By January 15, 2006, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will conduct a review of the course requirements and assessments that lead to industry certification in two or more career and technical education certification programs. The purpose of the review is to determine the extent to which they are aligned with the high school WASL. The review will also evaluate the statewide availability and utilization of the certifications.

Based on the review, OSPI is to determine if the content assessed for industry certifications are equivalent in rigor to the knowledge and skills assessed on the high school WASL, and whether the assessments for industry certifications should be used as alternatives to the WASL for the purposes of high school graduation. The OSPI will also develop a process for evaluating other industry certification programs to determine whether they can be used as assessment alternatives.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: OSPI must determine if the content assessed for industry certification is equivalent in rigor to the content assessed on the high school WASL.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This provides a needed part of the implementation of the education reform efforts. As an elective, career and technical education is under threat. With the emphasis on academic skills needed for the WASL, all electives are under threat of extinction. Career and technical education courses that lead to industry certification are rigorous programs and demand that students have strong academic skills. There are those students who will not perform well on the WASL one or more times. Many of these students will be discouraged and will drop out. Career and technical education courses provide these students with a relevant avenue to prepare them for success after high school. If assessments used for industry certifications that are equivalent in rigor to the skills assessed on the WASL can be used as an alternative to the WASL, many students may take advantage of this alternative to earn their Certificate of Academic Achievement and will stay in school. Industry has developed and accepted these certifications as evidence that the person who attains the certificate have the skills necessary to meet industry needs. Many students can earn high wages if they have industry certifications. If these certifications are acknowledged for employment purposes, they should be acknowledged for graduation purposes. However, any industry certification that may be used as an alternative to the WASL must be equivalent in rigor to the WASL.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Skip Priest, prime sponsor; Karen Dickinson, Charlie Hoff, Federal Way Public Schools; Susan Mielke, Washington Roundtable; Wes Pruitt, WTECB; Kathleen Lopp, Marianna Goheen, WA-ACTE; Gil Mendoza, Tacoma Public

Schools; Don Rash, AWSP; Bob Butts, OSPI; Rainer Houser, Association of Washington State Principals.