

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2733

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 23, 2006

Title: An act relating to information on high school transcripts.

Brief Description: Changing the requirements for information on high school transcripts.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives P. Sullivan, Simpson, Haler, McCoy, Schual-Berke, Curtis, Green and Morrell).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/06, 77-21.

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/16/06, 2/23/06 [DPA, DNP].

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

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair, Early Learning & K-12; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Delvin, Eide, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Pridemore, Vice Chair, Higher Education.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, public school students must meet the state standard on the 10th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) and graduate from high school, except for eligible special education students for whom the WASL is not appropriate. If it is determined by the student's Individualized Education Program team that the WASL is not appropriate for the student, even with accommodations, then the student will demonstrate his/her skill and knowledge using other measures and obtain a Certificate of Individual Achievement.

The State Board of Education was directed by the Legislature to develop a standardized transcript for use by all public school districts. Beginning with the graduation class of 2006, the high school transcript must display the highest WASL scale score and level. Beginning with the graduation class of 2008, if a student achieves level four the first time he or she takes a content area of the WASL, the student's transcript will include a scholar's designation. Once alternative assessments are formally approved by the Legislature, a student's transcript will note whether the CAA was obtained by means of the WASL or by an alternative assessment.

Summary of Amended Bill: The requirement that the standardized high school transcript contain a student's highest scale score and level in each content area of the WASL or alternative assessment is removed. The requirement that a scholars designation be included on a

student's transcript is limited to only those students who take the assessment before completing tenth grade and who achieve level four the first time they take the content area assessment.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement that a scholars designation be included on a student's transcript is reinstated but it is limited to only those students who take the assessment before completing tenth grade and who achieve level four the first time they take the content area assessment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: One of the rationales for putting a student's WASL scores on the student's transcript was to provide an incentive for students to take the test seriously because the test was not yet required for high school graduation. Now that the test is required that incentive is no longer needed. There is a question as to the value of including this information on the transcript since most universities and employers don't use these scores. It is also a matter of equity -- a student who meets the standard the first time will have their score on the transcript but so will a student who takes it three or four times and when that student finally meets the standard it may be at a higher level than the student who met the standard on the first try. What is important is whether the student meets the standards and passes the WASL, not how or when a student achieves this. This bill doesn't go far enough. How the student achieves the Certificate of Academic Achievement should also be removed from the transcript.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Pat Sullivan, prime sponsor; and Mary Kenfield, Washington State PTA.