

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6435

As of January 13, 2006

Title: An act relating to a certificate of academic progress.

Brief Description: Creating a certificate of academic progress.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Rockefeller, and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education:

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

Staff: Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

Background: Under current law, beginning with the high school graduating class of 2008, students must pass the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) or an alternative assessment to earn a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement.

Beginning with the class of 2008, to be eligible to receive a high school diploma, a student must earn a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement and meet state and local graduation requirements. The state graduation requirements include meeting the minimum number of credits and subject area requirements, satisfactorily completing a culminating project, and having an education plan for high school and the year after graduation.

Summary of Bill: Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2008, students who have completed all state and local requirements for graduation except for obtaining a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement may receive a certificate of academic progress. A certificate of academic progress is not equivalent to a diploma but does allow student participation in commencement ceremonies.

To meet the eligibility requirements for a certificate of academic progress, the student must:

- pass all state and local high school graduation requirements except for obtaining a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement and must have taken at least one retake;
- maintain at least a 90 percent attendance level during the senior year (may be waived under certain circumstances); and
- meet with counselors, teachers, and parents, as appropriate, to update his or her high school and beyond plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 10, 2006.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This would provide an incentive and recognition for students who have worked hard during school and who have met all of the graduation requirements but for passing the WASL. Requiring that they update their high school and beyond plan helps to ensure that planning revision occurs to address the fact that they didn't pass the WASL, but allowing the students to participate in commencement ceremonies recognizes that they may just need extra time to complete that part of the requirement. This will also create uniformity across the state.

Testimony Against: None.

Testimony Other: There is concern that this is yet another erosion in local control. Commencement is a closely held matter of local decision making and it shouldn't be standardized across the state. However, the concept is a good one.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, Prime Sponsor. CON: None. OTHER: Bill Keim, ESD 113.