
SENATE BILL 6461

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe and Schmidt

Read first time 01/12/2006. Referred to Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to a multiple measures approach to graduation
2 requirements; amending RCW 28A.655.061, 28A.155.045, and 28A.230.090;
3 adding a new section to chapter 28A.655 RCW; and creating a new
4 section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** It is the intent of the legislature to
7 account for a student's entire high school academic history by using a
8 weighted multiple measures approach to evaluate a student's readiness
9 to graduate. This method recognizes all of the state's graduation
10 requirements, considers the academic impact and benefit of each, and
11 puts all in proper perspective. It honors a well-rounded, rigorous,
12 and challenging educational experience that prepares our students for
13 a changing and complex twenty-first century. It recognizes that while
14 all students can learn at high levels, many demonstrate competencies
15 through various strengths, learning styles, and different formats, and
16 academically develop at different rates over time. It upholds all of
17 the state's four learning goals throughout a student's high school
18 tenure. It provides the opportunity to students to develop, grasp, and

1 demonstrate many learning objectives, including those beyond the tenth
2 grade. It will give students hope and reason to complete high school.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.655
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) Beginning with the class of 2008, every student shall be
6 required to obtain an average minimum threshold value of sixty-five
7 percent in relation to his or her performance in the high school
8 assessment system, as calculated under the provisions of subsection (2)
9 of this section, in order to obtain a diploma. To qualify for
10 graduation, a student must complete each of the five components in the
11 high school assessment system. The high school assessment system is
12 comprised of the following five components:

13 (a) Computation of the average grade point for those courses
14 required for graduation as determined by the state board of education;

15 (b) Computation of the average grade point for those courses
16 required locally for graduation;

17 (c) Completion of the high school and beyond plan;

18 (d) Completion of a culminating project; and

19 (e) Student scores on the assessments established under RCW
20 28A.655.061 or 28A.155.045.

21 (2)(a) Each component, except the component in subsection (1)(e) of
22 this section, shall be evaluated using a four-point grading system.
23 The state board of education shall establish guidelines for schools on
24 how to establish the point values to be assigned within each of the
25 four components of the high school assessment system.

26 (b) The state board of education shall establish guidelines for how
27 to allocate points related to subsection (1)(e) of this section but is
28 not limited to using a four-point grading system.

29 (c) In order to calculate the minimum threshold graduation
30 percentage, the state board of education shall create a weighted
31 graduation model where higher achievement on one component can offset
32 lower achievement on another. In relation to subsection (1)(a) of this
33 section, students must attain a minimum achievement of a passing grade
34 on every course required for graduation in order to be eligible for
35 graduation. In relation to subsection (1)(e) of this section, students
36 must attain a minimum of level one in each section of the Washington

1 assessment on student learning. The components in subsection (1)(a)
2 and (b) of this section shall be equal to seventy percent weight of the
3 whole on a one hundred percent scale.

4 (d) The components in subsection (1)(c) through (e) of this section
5 shall each have a ten percent weight of the whole on a one hundred
6 percent scale.

7 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.655.061 and 2004 c 19 s 101 are each amended to
8 read as follows:

9 (1) The high school assessment system shall include but ~~((need))~~
10 not be limited to the Washington assessment of student learning,
11 opportunities for a student to retake the content areas of the
12 assessment in which the student was not successful, and if approved by
13 the legislature pursuant to subsection (11) of this section, one or
14 more objective alternative assessments for a student to demonstrate
15 achievement of state academic standards. The objective alternative
16 assessments for each content area shall be comparable in rigor to the
17 skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the
18 Washington assessment of student learning for each content area.

19 (2) Subject to the conditions in this section, a certificate of
20 academic achievement ~~((shall be obtained by most students at about the
21 age of sixteen, and))~~ is evidence that the students have successfully
22 met the state standard in the content areas included in the
23 certificate. ~~((With the exception of students satisfying the
24 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, acquisition of the certificate is
25 required for graduation from a public high school but is not the only
26 requirement for graduation.))~~

27 (3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, with the exception
28 of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, a student who
29 meets the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics
30 content areas of the high school Washington assessment of student
31 learning shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. If a
32 student does not successfully meet the state standards in one or more
33 content areas required for the certificate of academic achievement,
34 then the student may retake the assessment in the content area up to
35 four times at no cost to the student. If the student successfully
36 meets the state standards on a retake of the assessment then the
37 student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. Once

1 objective alternative assessments are authorized pursuant to subsection
2 (11) of this section, a student may use the objective alternative
3 assessments to demonstrate that the student successfully meets the
4 state standards for that content area if the student has retaken the
5 Washington assessment of student learning at least once. If the
6 student successfully meets the state standards on the objective
7 alternative assessments then the student shall earn a certificate of
8 academic achievement. (~~The student's transcript shall note whether
9 the certificate of academic achievement was acquired by means of the
10 Washington assessment of student learning or by an alternative
11 assessment.~~)

12 (4) Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, a student must
13 meet the state standards in science in addition to the other content
14 areas required under subsection (3) of this section on the Washington
15 assessment of student learning or the objective alternative assessments
16 in order to earn a certificate of academic achievement.

17 (5) The state board of education may not require the acquisition of
18 the certificate of academic achievement for students in home-based
19 instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, for students enrolled in private
20 schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or for students satisfying the
21 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045.

22 (6) A student may retain and use the highest result from each
23 successfully completed content area of the high school assessment.

24 (~~Beginning with the graduating class of 2006, the highest
25 scale score and level achieved in each content area on the high school
26 Washington assessment of student learning shall be displayed on a
27 student's transcript. In addition,~~) Beginning with the graduating
28 class of 2008, each student shall receive a scholar's designation on
29 his or her transcript for each content area in which the student
30 achieves level four the first time the student takes that content area
31 assessment.

32 (8) Beginning in 2006, school districts must make available to
33 students the following options:

34 (a) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
35 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the
36 state standards if the student is enrolled in a public school; or

37 (b) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
38 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the

1 state standards if the student is enrolled in a high school completion
2 program at a community or technical college. The superintendent of
3 public instruction and the state board for community and technical
4 colleges shall jointly identify means by which students in these
5 programs can be assessed.

6 (9) Students who achieve the standard in a content area of the high
7 school assessment but who wish to improve their results shall pay for
8 retaking the assessment, using a uniform cost determined by the
9 superintendent of public instruction.

10 (10) Subject to available funding, the superintendent shall pilot
11 opportunities for retaking the high school assessment beginning in the
12 2004-05 school year. Beginning no later than September 2006,
13 opportunities to retake the assessment at least twice a year shall be
14 available to each school district.

15 (11) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
16 develop options for implementing objective alternative assessments,
17 which may include an appeals process, for students to demonstrate
18 achievement of the state academic standards. The objective alternative
19 assessments shall be comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge
20 that the student must demonstrate on the Washington assessment of
21 student learning and be objective in its determination of student
22 achievement of the state standards. Before any objective alternative
23 assessments are used by a student to demonstrate that the student has
24 met the state standards in a content area required to obtain a
25 certificate, the legislature shall formally approve the use of any
26 objective alternative assessments through the omnibus appropriations
27 act or by statute or concurrent resolution.

28 (12) By December 15, 2004, the house of representatives and senate
29 education committees shall obtain information and conclusions from
30 recognized, independent, national assessment experts regarding the
31 validity and reliability of the high school Washington assessment of
32 student learning for making individual student high school graduation
33 determinations.

34 (13) To help assure continued progress in academic achievement as
35 a foundation for high school graduation and to assure that students are
36 on track for high school graduation, each school district shall prepare
37 plans for students as provided in this subsection (13).

1 (a) Student learning plans are required for eighth through twelfth
2 grade students who were not successful on any or all of the content
3 areas of the Washington assessment for student learning during the
4 previous school year. The plan shall include the courses,
5 competencies, and other steps needed to be taken by the student to meet
6 state academic standards and stay on track for graduation. This
7 requirement shall be phased in as follows:

8 (i) Beginning no later than the 2004-05 school year ninth grade
9 students as described in this subsection (13)(a) shall have a plan.

10 (ii) Beginning no later than the 2005-06 school year and every year
11 thereafter eighth grade students as described in this subsection
12 (13)(a) shall have a plan.

13 (iii) The parent or guardian shall be notified, preferably through
14 a parent conference, of the student's results on the Washington
15 assessment of student learning, actions the school intends to take to
16 improve the student's skills in any content area in which the student
17 was unsuccessful, strategies to help them improve their student's
18 skills, and the content of the student's plan.

19 (iv) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the
20 student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the
21 plan made as necessary.

22 (b) Beginning with the 2005-06 school year and every year
23 thereafter, all fifth grade students who were not successful in one or
24 more of the content areas of the fourth grade Washington assessment of
25 student learning shall have a student learning plan.

26 (i) The parent or guardian of a student described in this
27 subsection (13)(b) shall be notified, preferably through a parent
28 conference, of the student's results on the Washington assessment of
29 student learning, actions the school intends to take to improve the
30 student's skills in any content area in which the student was
31 unsuccessful, and provide strategies to help them improve their
32 student's skills.

33 (ii) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the
34 student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the
35 plan made as necessary.

36 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.155.045 and 2004 c 19 s 104 are each amended to
37 read as follows:

1 Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students served under
2 this chapter, who are not appropriately assessed by the high school
3 Washington assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061, even with
4 accommodations, may earn a certificate of individual achievement. The
5 certificate may be earned using multiple ways to demonstrate skills and
6 abilities commensurate with their individual education programs. The
7 determination of whether the high school assessment system is
8 appropriate shall be made by the student's individual education program
9 team. (~~For these students, the certificate of individual achievement~~
10 ~~is required for graduation from a public high school, but need not be~~
11 ~~the only requirement for graduation.~~) When measures other than the
12 high school assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used,
13 the measures shall be in agreement with the appropriate educational
14 opportunity provided for the student as required by this chapter. The
15 superintendent of public instruction shall develop the guidelines for
16 determining which students should not be required to participate in the
17 high school assessment system and which types of assessments are
18 appropriate to use.

19 When measures other than the high school assessment system as
20 defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used for high school graduation
21 purposes, the student's high school transcript shall note whether that
22 student has earned a certificate of individual achievement.

23 Nothing in this section shall be construed to deny a student the
24 right to participation in the high school assessment system as defined
25 in RCW 28A.655.061, and, upon successfully meeting the high school
26 standard, receipt of the certificate of academic achievement.

27 **Sec. 5.** RCW 28A.230.090 and 2005 c 205 s 3 are each amended to
28 read as follows:

29 (1) The state board of education shall establish high school
30 graduation requirements or equivalencies for students.

31 (a) Any course in Washington state history and government used to
32 fulfill high school graduation requirements shall consider including
33 information on the culture, history, and government of the American
34 Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state.

35 (b) (~~The certificate of academic achievement requirements under~~
36 ~~RCW 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement~~
37 ~~requirements under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a~~

1 ~~public high school but are not the only requirements for graduation))~~
2 Students must have met the requirements of the high school assessment
3 system in section 2 of this act.

4 (c) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board's
5 high school graduation requirements for a high school and beyond plan
6 shall remain at the local level.

7 (2) In recognition of the statutory authority of the state board of
8 education to establish and enforce minimum high school graduation
9 requirements, the state board shall periodically reevaluate the
10 graduation requirements and shall report such findings to the
11 legislature in a timely manner as determined by the state board.

12 (3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other
13 than English established by the state board of education or a local
14 school district, or both, for purposes of high school graduation,
15 students who receive instruction in American sign language or one or
16 more American Indian languages shall be considered to have satisfied
17 the state or local school district graduation requirement for
18 instruction in one or more languages other than English.

19 (4) If requested by the student and his or her family, a student
20 who has completed high school courses before attending high school
21 shall be given high school credit which shall be applied to fulfilling
22 high school graduation requirements if:

23 (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic
24 level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth
25 grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing
26 the same course requirements and examinations as the high school
27 students enrolled in the class; or

28 (b) The academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for
29 seventh and eighth grade classes and the course would qualify for high
30 school credit, because the course is similar or equivalent to a course
31 offered at a high school in the district as determined by the school
32 district board of directors.

33 (5) Students who have taken and successfully completed high school
34 courses under the circumstances in subsection (4) of this section shall
35 not be required to take an additional competency examination or perform
36 any other additional assignment to receive credit.

1 (6) At the college or university level, five quarter or three
2 semester hours equals one high school credit.

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