
SENATE BILL 6620

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senators Rasmussen, Pridemore and Benton

Read first time 01/17/2006. Referred to Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to eliminating the certificate of academic
2 achievement as a requirement for high school graduation; amending RCW
3 28A.655.061, 28A.155.045, and 28A.230.090; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that it is important
6 to recognize that students have multiple learning styles and that too
7 often a single, high stakes test does not accommodate all learning
8 styles. It is important to have high academic standards and the
9 Washington assessment of student learning can be an effective tool to
10 assist districts in achieving them. The Washington assessment of
11 student learning, however, may not adequately challenge our high
12 performing students and it takes valuable time and resources away from
13 essential learning for all students. Therefore, it is the intent of
14 the legislature to eliminate the use of the Washington assessment of
15 student learning as a graduation requirement.

16 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.655.061 and 2004 c 19 s 101 are each amended to
17 read as follows:

18 (1) The high school assessment system shall include but (~~need~~)

1 not be limited to the Washington assessment of student learning,
2 opportunities for a student to retake the content areas of the
3 assessment in which the student was not successful, and if approved by
4 the legislature pursuant to subsection ~~((+11))~~ (10) of this section,
5 one or more objective alternative assessments for a student to
6 demonstrate achievement of state academic standards. The objective
7 alternative assessments for each content area shall be comparable in
8 rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on
9 the Washington assessment of student learning for each content area.

10 (2) Subject to the conditions in this section, a certificate of
11 academic achievement ~~((shall be obtained by most students at about the
12 age of sixteen, and))~~ is evidence that the students have successfully
13 met the state standard in the content areas included in the
14 certificate. ~~((With the exception of students satisfying the
15 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, acquisition of the certificate is
16 required for graduation from a public high school but is not the only
17 requirement for graduation.))~~

18 (3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, with the exception
19 of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, a student who
20 meets the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics
21 content areas of the high school Washington assessment of student
22 learning shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. If a
23 student does not successfully meet the state standards in one or more
24 content areas required for the certificate of academic achievement,
25 then the student may retake the assessment in the content area up to
26 four times at no cost to the student. If the student successfully
27 meets the state standards on a retake of the assessment then the
28 student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. Once
29 objective alternative assessments are authorized pursuant to subsection
30 ~~((+11))~~ (10) of this section, a student may use the objective
31 alternative assessments to demonstrate that the student successfully
32 meets the state standards for that content area if the student has
33 retaken the Washington assessment of student learning at least once.
34 If the student successfully meets the state standards on the objective
35 alternative assessments then the student shall earn a certificate of
36 academic achievement. ~~((The student's transcript shall note whether
37 the certificate of academic achievement was acquired by means of the~~

1 ~~Washington assessment of student learning or by an alternative~~
2 ~~assessment.))~~

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

8 (5) The state board of education may not require the acquisition of
9 the certificate of academic achievement for students in home-based
10 instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, for students enrolled in private
11 schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or for students satisfying the
12 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045.

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

15 ~~(7) ((Beginning with the graduating class of 2006, the highest~~
16 ~~scale score and level achieved in each content area on the high school~~
17 ~~Washington assessment of student learning shall be displayed on a~~
18 ~~student's transcript. In addition, beginning with the graduating class~~
19 ~~of 2008, each student shall receive a scholar's designation on his or~~
20 ~~her transcript for each content area in which the student achieves~~
21 ~~level four the first time the student takes that content area~~
22 ~~assessment.~~

23 ~~(8))~~ Beginning in 2006, school districts must make available to
24 students the following options:

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

28 (b) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
29 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the
30 state standards if the student is enrolled in a high school completion
31 program at a community or technical college. The superintendent of
32 public instruction and the state board for community and technical
33 colleges shall jointly identify means by which students in these
34 programs can be assessed.

35 ~~((9))~~ (8) Students who achieve the standard in a content area of
36 the high school assessment but who wish to improve their results shall
37 pay for retaking the assessment, using a uniform cost determined by the
38 superintendent of public instruction.

1 (~~(10)~~) (9) Subject to available funding, the superintendent shall
2 pilot opportunities for retaking the high school assessment beginning
3 in the 2004-05 school year. Beginning no later than September 2006,
4 opportunities to retake the assessment at least twice a year shall be
5 available to each school district.

6 (~~(11)~~) (10) The office of the superintendent of public
7 instruction shall develop options for implementing objective
8 alternative assessments, which may include an appeals process, for
9 students to demonstrate achievement of the state academic standards.
10 The objective alternative assessments shall be comparable in rigor to
11 the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the
12 Washington assessment of student learning and be objective in its
13 determination of student achievement of the state standards. Before
14 any objective alternative assessments are used by a student to
15 demonstrate that the student has met the state standards in a content
16 area required to obtain a certificate, the legislature shall formally
17 approve the use of any objective alternative assessments through the
18 omnibus appropriations act or by statute or concurrent resolution.

19 (~~(12)~~) (11) By December 15, 2004, the house of representatives
20 and senate education committees shall obtain information and
21 conclusions from recognized, independent, national assessment experts
22 regarding the validity and reliability of the high school Washington
23 assessment of student learning for making individual student high
24 school graduation determinations.

25 (~~(13)~~) (12) To help assure continued progress in academic
26 achievement as a foundation for high school graduation and to assure
27 that students are on track for high school graduation, each school
28 district shall prepare plans for students as provided in this
29 subsection (~~(13)~~) (12).

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

37 (i) Beginning no later than the 2004-05 school year ninth grade

1 students as described in this subsection (~~((+13))~~) (12)(a) shall have a
2 plan.

3 (ii) Beginning no later than the 2005-06 school year and every year
4 thereafter eighth grade students as described in this subsection
5 (~~((+13))~~) (12)(a) shall have a plan.

6 (iii) The parent or guardian shall be notified, preferably through
7 a parent conference, of the student's results on the Washington
8 assessment of student learning, actions the school intends to take to
9 improve the student's skills in any content area in which the student
10 was unsuccessful, strategies to help them improve their student's
11 skills, and the content of the student's plan.

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

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

19 (i) The parent or guardian of a student described in this
20 subsection (~~((+13))~~) (12)(b) shall be notified, preferably through a
21 parent conference, of the student's results on the Washington
22 assessment of student learning, actions the school intends to take to
23 improve the student's skills in any content area in which the student
24 was unsuccessful, and provide strategies to help them improve their
25 student's skills.

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

29 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.155.045 and 2004 c 19 s 104 are each amended to
30 read as follows:

31 Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students served under
32 this chapter, who are not appropriately assessed by the high school
33 Washington assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061, even with
34 accommodations, may earn a certificate of individual achievement. The
35 certificate may be earned using multiple ways to demonstrate skills and
36 abilities commensurate with their individual education programs. The
37 determination of whether the high school assessment system is

1 appropriate shall be made by the student's individual education program
2 team. (~~For these students, the certificate of individual achievement~~
3 ~~is required for graduation from a public high school, but need not be~~
4 ~~the only requirement for graduation.~~) When measures other than the
5 high school assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used,
6 the measures shall be in agreement with the appropriate educational
7 opportunity provided for the student as required by this chapter. The
8 superintendent of public instruction shall develop the guidelines for
9 determining which students should not be required to participate in the
10 high school assessment system and which types of assessments are
11 appropriate to use.

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

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

20 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.230.090 and 2005 c 205 s 3 are each amended to
21 read as follows:

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

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

28 (b) (~~The certificate of academic achievement requirements under~~
29 ~~RCW 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement~~
30 ~~requirements under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a~~
31 ~~public high school but are not the only requirements for graduation.~~

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

35 (2) In recognition of the statutory authority of the state board of
36 education to establish and enforce minimum high school graduation

1 requirements, the state board shall periodically reevaluate the
2 graduation requirements and shall report such findings to the
3 legislature in a timely manner as determined by the state board.

4 (3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other
5 than English established by the state board of education or a local
6 school district, or both, for purposes of high school graduation,
7 students who receive instruction in American sign language or one or
8 more American Indian languages shall be considered to have satisfied
9 the state or local school district graduation requirement for
10 instruction in one or more languages other than English.

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

15 (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic
16 level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth
17 grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing
18 the same course requirements and examinations as the high school
19 students enrolled in the class; or

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

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

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

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