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## Higher Education Committee

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### HB 2109

**Brief Description:** Regarding readiness for college-level work.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Anderson and Wallace.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the University of Washington and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to make the Mathematics Placement Test applicable to college entry expectations for both the four-year and two-year institutions.
- Requires the four-year and two-year institutions to adopt, and publish on their web sites, minimum scores on the Mathematics Placement Test, the SAT, and the ACT that will demonstrate college readiness in mathematics, writing, reading, and English.
- Prohibits four-year institutions from providing pre-college coursework in mathematics, reading, writing, or English, with the exception of English courses for English language learners.
- Requires school districts to make available to high school students the option to take the Mathematics Placement Test and the SAT or the ACT once, at no cost to the student.

**Hearing Date:** 2/22/07

**Staff:** Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

#### **Background:**

Colleges and universities use a number of different tests to help determine whether, and at what level, students are prepared for college-level work. To place new students into the appropriate level of English or mathematics courses, community and technical colleges in Washington generally use the ASSET or COMPASS test available from American College Test, Inc., or the ACCUPLACER test available from the College Board.

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Four-year universities consider SAT or ACT scores in their decisions for admission, but rely on a different set of tests, known as the Math Placement Test (MPT) developed by the University of Washington to assist them in determining the appropriate math course for incoming students. Not all universities offer or require placement tests for English, but those that do use different tests. Most of the universities do not require a student to take a placement test in math or English if the student met specified scores on the SAT, the ACT, or a high school Advanced Placement exam.

Some high schools in Washington are working with local community or technical colleges to administer college placement tests to students in grades 10 or 11 as a way to provide early information about college readiness. They also use the results as a planning and guidance tool for students. In its final recommendations issued in November 2006, the Washington Learns steering committee recommended the use of college placement tests for students in grades 10 or 11 for this purpose.

The Transition Math Project (TMP) was started in 2004 to address issues surrounding college readiness standards in math, including placement testing. It is a collaborative venture involving educators from K-12 schools, community and technical colleges, and baccalaureate institutions. The TMP is designed to help students successfully progress from high school math to college-level math. The TMP identified the math skills and knowledge high school graduates need to complete college-level work, meet minimum admission requirements and avoid remediation upon enrolling in college. The TMP has completed work on the College Readiness Standards (CRS) in math, and current work involves aligning the MPT to the CRS.

In 2005 the Higher Education Coordinating Board began work on the College Readiness Project. The purpose of the project is to enable high school students to better understand, and be better prepared, for college-level coursework. To date, the project has completed work involving college readiness in English and Science.

### **Summary of Bill:**

#### Common Placement Tests and Minimum Standardized Test Scores

The University of Washington and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges shall evaluate the MPT, and make any necessary changes to make it usable for both two-year and four-year institutions. Community and technical colleges, and any four-year institutions that require placement testing in math, writing, reading, or English, shall adopt scores for the MPT, the SAT, and the ACT, as applicable, that, when achieved by a student, will demonstrate college readiness in the subject area. These same institutions may allow other means of demonstrating college readiness, such as scores on other standardized tests or previous high school or college coursework.

#### Limitation on Remedial Coursework at Four-year Institutions

The four-year institutions shall not provide pre-college coursework in math, reading, writing, or English, with the exception of English courses for English language learners. If a student does not place into college-level coursework in one of those subjects, the institution will notify the student that he or she may take such coursework at a community or technical college, or a private institution.

#### Making Standardized Tests Available to High School Students

Starting with the 2008 school year, school districts must give all high school students the option of taking the MPT, the SAT, or the ACT, one time, at no cost to the students. Districts shall encourage students to take the tests during grade 11 or 12. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction shall reimburse the district for the costs incurred in making the tests available to students, and is encouraged to seek fee waivers for administration of the tests.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 22, 2007.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.