

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 6023

PARTIAL VETO

C 354 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the Washington assessment of student learning.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe and Rasmussen).

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education

House Committee on Education

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students must meet the state standard on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), or a legislatively approved alternative assessment, to achieve a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA), which is required to graduate from high school. Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, students will also have to meet the state standards on the science WASL to obtain a CAA. Students must retake the WASL at least once prior to taking an approved alternative assessment. Three alternative assessments have received legislative approval: the Grade Point Average (GPA)/WASL cohort comparison, the Collection of Evidence (COE), and the PSAT/SAT/ACT Mathematics Equivalent. Alternative assessments are required to be comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the WASL for each content area.

The other state high school graduation requirements are successful completion of 19 minimum course requirements established by the State Board of Education (SBE), completion of a culminating project, and the creation of a high school and beyond plan.

Students who are not appropriately assessed by the WASL, even with accommodations, may earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA), instead of a CAA, to graduate from high school. To earn the CIA, the student must demonstrate skills and abilities commensurate with the student's individual education program.

There are 24 states in addition to Washington that plan to or currently require students to pass statewide assessments for high school graduation. Seven of these states use a series of "end-of-course" assessments, where students take the test after completing a course that covers the core content to be assessed by the test. In most of these states, the mathematics end-of-course assessment for high school graduation is Algebra. The science end-of-course assessments tend to be Biology.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, all English Language Learner (ELL) students must participate in the WASL tests scheduled for their grade. The only exception is students who are in their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools are not required to participate in reading or writing tests, but must take the mathematics exam. ELL students who participate in

the bilingual program must also take the Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT) in reading, writing, speaking, and listening each year until they exit the bilingual program.

Beginning September 1, 2007, the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) must make available to school districts diagnostic assessments aligned with the state's grade-level expectations.

Summary: Changes are made to the use of the WASL as a graduation requirement. The CAA is maintained for students who meet the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics on the WASL, or a legislatively approved alternative assessment beginning in 2008. Beginning no later than the graduating class of 2013, students will also have to meet the state standards on the science WASL to obtain the CAA. SBE may adopt a rule requiring students to meet the state standards on the science WASL prior to the graduating class of 2013 to obtain the CAA.

An ELL who scores below level four on the state English proficiency test does not have to take the WASL, except for federal purposes and for graduation purposes. OSPI and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board must convene an advisory committee, comprised of legislators and others, to identify career and technical education curricula that will assist in preparing students for the state assessment system and obtaining a CAA.

The requirement to retake the WASL prior to taking an approved alternative assessment is removed. To access the GPA/WASL cohort alternative, a student must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.2 on a four-point grading scale. After August 31, 2008, the PSAT mathematics equivalent will no longer be an approved alternative to the mathematics WASL. Specified scores on specified SAT and ACT assessments are authorized as approved alternatives for the reading and writing WASL. Specified Advance Placement examinations are approved alternatives for the reading, writing, and mathematics WASL. OSPI is authorized to arrange for students to receive a testing fee waiver or make other arrangements for students to take the approved alternative assessments. SBE must examine other possibilities for alternative assessments, including standardized norm-referenced assessments and portions of the ACT ASSET and ACT COMPASS assessments and make recommendations to the Legislature by January 10, 2008.

A conditional delay of the WASL as a graduation requirement in mathematics is created for the graduating classes of 2008 through 2012, to graduate without a CAA or CIA. Students who meet all the state and school district graduation requirements and do not meet the state standard on the mathematics WASL, or an approved alternative assessment, are required to earn one or two additional mathematics credits or career and technical course equivalents as specified for the graduating class. Additionally, the students must continue to take the appropriate mathematics assessment until graduation.

It is clarified that the diagnostic assessments provided by OSPI must address reading, writing, mathematics, and science in elementary, middle, and high school grades. Subject to funding, OSPI must also provide funds for administration of the diagnostic assessments and training.

The bill provides that the Legislature's intent is to make significant improvements in the high school WASL in mathematics and science, and a belief that end-of-course assessments would be a superior assessment system; that end-of-course assessments in mathematics should cover

at least Algebra I and Geometry, and assessments in science should cover at least Biology, but also address other science content areas; that the recommended changes are able to be implemented no later than the 2010-11 school year in order to apply to the graduating class of 2013; and that replacing the current WASL represents a significant change that should be thoroughly evaluated. SBE must examine and recommend changes to the high school mathematics and science WASL. The primary change to be examined by SBE is replacing the high school WASL with end-of- course assessments in mathematics and science. Additional topics to be covered by the examination are specified. The SBE report is due by January 10, 2008.

Before the 2007-08 school year, each Educational Service District (ESD) must implement an appeals panel or panels comprised of teachers, principals, and members of the business community with relevant knowledge and expertise, to review and decide appeals from students within 60 days. The appeal is for students to demonstrate that the student has a level of understanding of a content area sufficient to meet the standard, but did not meet the standard on the WASL. Students who are eligible to appeal must be in the junior or senior year of high school; have retaken the WASL or an alternative; have participated in the remediation in the student learning plan; and have met one of four other specified criteria. ESDs must report to the Legislature regarding the number and types of appeals received and approved. SBE must adopt rules, including uniform criteria to be used by the appeals. The criteria must include a review of specified student information.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	43	4	
House	81	17	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur)
House	56	41	(House amended)
Senate	30	18	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2007

Partial Veto Summary: The language addressing the Legislature's belief that end-of-course assessments would improve the high school mathematics and science WASLs is vetoed. The direction to the SBE to study, examine, and recommend changes to the high school assessments in mathematics and science, focusing on replacement of the current assessments with specifically identified end-of-course assessments, is vetoed. The authority to create an appeals panel at each ESD is vetoed. The provisions permitting certain ELL students to not take the WASL, except for federal purposes and for graduation purposes, are vetoed. The emergency clause is vetoed.