
Education Committee

HB 1341

Brief Description: Motivating students through incentives to pursue postsecondary education by eliminating statewide assessments as a high school graduation requirement.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Haler, Hasegawa, Sells, Seaquist, Goodman, Appleton, Hunt, Chase, Kenney, Simpson, Campbell, Nelson, McCoy and Van De Wege.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Repeals the requirement that students must earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) by meeting the state standard on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) for high school graduation.
- Repeals the requirement that students in special education earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA).
- Repeals all references to the CAA and CIA, retakes of the WASL, alternative assessments, and other policies associated with these requirements.
- Directs a review of incentive programs in other states that are intended to motivate students to meet state standards.

Hearing Date: 2/4/09

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383)

Background:

Starting with the class of 2008, high school students are required to meet the state standard on the 10th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in reading, writing, and mathematics to receive a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). Students in special education who are not appropriately assessed using the WASL can earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). The CAA or CIA were to be required for high school graduation starting with the class of 2008, but the 2007 Legislature enacted a temporary exception for students who do not meet the state standard in mathematics. Until 2013, these

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students can still graduate as long as they have met the state standard on the reading and writing WASL, take additional mathematics courses, and continue taking the test.

In 2013, the CAA and CIA will be required for high school graduation, and will also require students to have met the state standard on the science WASL. As of 2007-08, 23 states, including Washington, require students to pass some form of exit exam for graduation purposes. The types of tests and the required subjects vary widely.

Students have multiple opportunities to retake the high school WASL. In 2006 and 2007, the Legislature authorized several objective alternative assessments for students who are unsuccessful on the high school WASL after at least one attempt. In 2008, the Legislature directed that the high school mathematics WASL become a series of end-of-course tests. These tests will be used as the high school WASL in mathematics for purposes of graduation.

The 2008 Legislature also directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to reduce the number of open-ended and extended response questions on the WASL in all subjects except writing and all grades except high school, effective with the 2010 administration of the test.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that, in order to graduate, students must earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) by meeting the state standard on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is repealed. Students in special education no longer have to earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). Laws are repealed pertaining to retaking the high school WASL, creating objective alternative assessments to the high school WASL, establishing a pilot program for students who complete other high school graduation requirements except meeting the standard on the WASL, requiring students who do not pass the high school WASL in mathematics to take additional mathematics courses until 2013, and requiring use of the end-of-course assessments in mathematics as the high school WASL for graduation purposes. All references to the CAA and CIA are eliminated.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must redesign the high school WASL by 2010 to reduce the number of short answer and extended response questions.

The SPI, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges must conduct a review of incentive programs in other states that are intended to increase the number of students meeting state standards and/or motivate students to pursue postsecondary education. A report is due to the Legislature by December 1, 2009, including recommendations for incentive programs to spend savings realized by eliminating the statewide assessment for graduation and consideration of creating a public-private partnership to implement the recommendations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/26/2009.

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