

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6553

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 4, 2010

Title: An act relating to high school mathematics and science graduation requirements.

Brief Description: Regarding mathematics and science high school graduation requirements.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe and Shin; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/03/10, 2/04/10 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6553 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair, Early Learning; Oemig, Vice Chair, K-12; King, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Gordon, Hobbs, McDermott and Roach.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Graduation Requirements. Currently, the minimum high school graduation requirements include two credits in mathematics. Beginning with the class of 2013, the minimum high school graduation requirements will include three credits in mathematics.

Since 2008, students must meet the state standard on the statewide high school assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) and graduate from high school. Students in special education whose knowledge and skills are not appropriately tested using this assessment can earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) and graduate from high school.

Beginning in 2008 through 2012, students who do not meet the state standard on the mathematics assessment may graduate from high school without a CAA or CIA, if the student meets: the state standard on the reading and writing assessment; all other graduation requirements; and earns two mathematics credits after tenth grade.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Beginning in 2013, students must meet the standard on all four high school assessments (reading, writing, mathematics, and science) to earn a CAA, which will be required for graduation. Students in the class of 2013 are currently freshmen in high school.

Mathematics and Science Assessments. In 2008 the Legislature directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to replace the statewide comprehensive high school mathematics assessment with two end-of-course assessments (EOCs). One will be for Algebra/Integrated Math I, and the second will be for Geometry/Integrated Math II. There will be subtests for topics unique to each of these four courses which will not be part of the graduation requirements. The mathematics EOCs must be implemented statewide in the 2010-11 school year. As the transition is made, students may use the results of either the comprehensive assessment or the EOCs to obtain a CAA. Beginning with the class of 2015, only results from the EOCs will be used.

The statewide high school science assessment is a comprehensive assessment.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Working Group. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, collaboratively with the State Board of Education (SBE), must establish a working group to examine the changes and challenges that are impacting student learning in mathematics and science. The SBE must report the findings of the working group and develop recommendations for changes, including a plan with a timeline to make significant improvement in student learning in these content areas. The working group must report to the Legislature by November 30, 2010.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute As Passed Committee): All provisions of the bill are removed except for the working group that will examine what is impacting the changes and challenges impacting student learning in mathematics and science. The structure of the working group is changed to require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to work collaboratively with the State Board of Education.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on original bill.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute As Heard in Committee:
PRO: Many of our students are taking Algebra I in 7th or 8th grade prior to when the end-of-course exams will be administered in 10th grade. The system is not ready to support students sufficiently to implement the math and science requirements for graduation. We should not penalize students for adults' decisions to make these changes that will ultimately improve the system but that means we should delay imposing this requirement on students. Reading, writing, and mathematics are consistently taught daily but we need more consistency in the

teaching of science. Also we should make sure that the curriculum is aligned with our new science standards. The end-of-course assessments have not yet been made so teachers do not know what will be tested and this means they don't know what they should focus upon when they are teaching. All students do not need the same math at the same point in their life so let students graduate by taking additional math classes instead of meeting some standard on the test. Please put back in the ability for these students to meet the basic level to graduate. High school graduation or commencement is really a beginning of life – don't deny students this goal. We support the move to end-of-course assessments in both math and science. Don't use the assessment for graduation since the federal law does not require an exit exam.

CON: Without a systematic state plan we continue to delay in helping students to succeed. Delay is not an answer. We support the working group to look at what is impacting students math and science achievement. Students will never take these assessments seriously because the implementation continues to be delayed. There are many positive things happening in the system to assist our students to learn math and science and we need to support those efforts by maintaining the graduation requirement.

OTHER: We are very concerned about the continued delay of math. Our students are not equipped to transition into our higher education institutions and need remedial assistance to continue their education. We need to prepare our students better.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Randy Dorn, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Joe Willhoft, OSPI; Brian Berg, Washington Education Association; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators; Kim Howard, PTA; Joyce Fiess, Citizens for Responsible Education.

CON: Brad Burnham, SBE; Lew McMurrin, Washington Technology Industry Association; Heather Cope, League of Education Voters; Jim Kainber, Stand for Children.

OTHER: Donna Steward, Association of Washington Business.