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HOUSE BILL 2132

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Representatives Quall, Anderson, Carlyle, Dammeier, Probst, Sullivan, Johnson, Hudgins, Kelley, Chase, Wood, and Santos

Read first time 02/11/09. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to instruction in civics; amending RCW 28A.230.090;  
2 adding a new section to chapter 28A.230 RCW; and creating a new  
3 section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that although the  
6 United States has long exemplified democratic practice to the rest of  
7 the world, we ought not to neglect it at home. Two-thirds of our  
8 nation's twelfth graders scored below proficient on the last national  
9 civics assessment, and fewer than ten percent could list two ways that  
10 a democracy benefits from citizen participation. A healthy democracy  
11 depends on the participation of citizens. But participation is learned  
12 behavior, and in recent years civic learning has been pushed aside.  
13 Preparation for citizenship is as important as preparation for college  
14 and a career, and should take its place as a requirement for receiving  
15 a high school diploma.

16 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.230.090 and 2006 c 114 s 3 are each amended to  
17 read as follows:

18 (1) The state board of education shall establish high school

1 graduation requirements or equivalencies for students, except those  
2 equivalencies established by local high schools or school districts  
3 under RCW 28A.230.097. The purpose of a high school diploma is to  
4 declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education,  
5 gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to  
6 be a lifelong learner.

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

11 (b) The certificate of academic achievement requirements under RCW  
12 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement requirements  
13 under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a public high  
14 school but are not the only requirements for graduation.

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

18 (2) In recognition of the statutory authority of the state board of  
19 education to establish and enforce minimum high school graduation  
20 requirements, the state board shall periodically reevaluate the  
21 graduation requirements and shall report such findings to the  
22 legislature in a timely manner as determined by the state board. The  
23 state board shall reevaluate the graduation requirements for students  
24 enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous career and technical  
25 education programs, particularly those programs that lead to a  
26 certificate or credential that is state or nationally recognized. The  
27 purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students enrolled in these  
28 programs have sufficient opportunity to earn a certificate of academic  
29 achievement, complete the program and earn the program's certificate or  
30 credential, and complete other state and local graduation requirements.  
31 ~~((The board shall reports [report] its findings and recommendations for~~  
32 ~~additional flexibility in graduation requirements, if necessary, to the~~  
33 ~~legislature by December 1, 2007.))~~

34 (3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other  
35 than English established by the state board of education or a local  
36 school district, or both, for purposes of high school graduation,  
37 students who receive instruction in American sign language or one or

1 more American Indian languages shall be considered to have satisfied  
2 the state or local school district graduation requirement for  
3 instruction in one or more languages other than English.

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

8 (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic  
9 level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth  
10 grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing  
11 the same course requirements and examinations as the high school  
12 students enrolled in the class; or

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

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

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

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230  
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 (1) If, after the effective date of this section, the state board  
27 of education increases the number of course credits in social studies  
28 that are required for high school graduation under RCW 28A.230.090, the  
29 board shall also require that at least one-half credit of that  
30 requirement be coursework in civics.

31 (2) The content of the civics requirement must include, but not be  
32 limited to:

33 (a) Federal, state, and local government organization and  
34 procedures;

35 (b) Rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the  
36 Washington state and United States Constitutions;

37 (c) Current issues addressed at each level of government; and

1           (d) Electoral issues, including elections, ballot measures,  
2 initiatives, and referenda.

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