

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SHB 1519

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding school assessments for students with cognitive disabilities.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations & Oversight (originally sponsored by Representatives Hope, Dunshee, Anderson, Haler, Pettigrew, Fagan, Sells, Johnson, Orwall, Haigh, Kenney, Kelley and Ormsby).

House Committee on Education
House Committee on Education Appropriations & Oversight
Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education

Background:

The Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS) is an alternate assessment that is an option only for students with significant cognitive challenges. The term "significantly cognitively challenged" is a designation applied to a small number of students, generally 10 percent or less of those eligible for special education and related services, participating in the statewide assessment system.

The decision about how a special education student participates in the statewide assessment system is an individualized educational program (IEP) team decision. There is no limit on the number of students in a district to whom the WAAS may be administered. However, there is a limit upon the number of students who successfully pass the WAAS that may be counted for federal adequate yearly progress purposes. This cap is 1 percent of the total student population being tested in the required grades for the state and 1 percent of the total student population being tested in the required grades for each district.

The WAAS is a portfolio assessment that is individualized by a teacher for each individual student. A task assessment, by contrast, provides a specified test map, along with items or tasks that provide the same basis for scoring and interpreting results.

Summary:

The Legislature finds that one of the difficult issues facing states and districts across the country is the inclusion of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in their state assessment and accountability systems. Assessing academic knowledge and skills of

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students with unique and significant cognitive disabilities is not only challenging and time consuming, but also may provide only limited information.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is tasked with continuing to work with teachers and special education programs in the development and implementation of a process to transition from the current portfolio assessment system to a performance task-based assessment.

In the meantime, and within existing resources, the OSPI must also coordinate efforts to:

- align academic goals in a student's IEP with the current assessment system by identifying detailed statewide alternate achievement benchmarks for use by teachers;
- develop a transparent and reliable scoring process;
- efficiently use technology; and
- develop a sensible approval process to shorten the time involved in developing and collecting assessment data.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0
Senate	49	0

Effective: July 22, 2011