
Education Committee

HB 1524

Brief Description: Recognizing the international baccalaureate diploma.

Sponsors: Representative Orwall.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that students who complete specified requirements of an International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme are considered to have satisfied state minimum high school graduation requirements, except that they must still meet the state standard on required state assessments and study the United States and Washington Constitutions as required by law.

Hearing Date: 2/11/11

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Graduation Requirements. The State Board of Education establishes minimum statewide graduation requirements. Currently students must earn 19 credits in specified course areas, complete a culminating project, and prepare a high school and beyond plan. Beginning with the graduating class of 2012, 20 credits are required.

In addition, state law requires that students must meet the standard on the state reading and writing assessments, and take additional math classes if they do not meet the standard on the state mathematics assessment. Beginning with the graduating class of 2013, students must meet the standard on the state assessments in reading, writing, mathematics, and science for graduation. State law also requires all students to study the United States and Washington Constitutions as a prerequisite to graduation.

School districts may establish other local graduation requirements. High school diplomas are issued by school districts to students who meet state and local graduation requirements.

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.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB). The IB is designed as an academically challenging series of courses, student work, and examinations which are usually offered over a two-year period. Students must complete a yearlong course in six subjects: primary language, secondary language, individuals and societies, science, mathematics, and either the arts or a second course in one of the other subjects. Students must also complete a Theory of Knowledge course, produce an extended essay, participate in a Creativity, Action, and Service activity, and complete internally and externally-scored assessment tasks.

To earn an IB Diploma, students must also pass end-of-course examinations in each of their six courses. The IB examinations are offered twice a year. The results of the November examinations are issued in January; the results of the May examinations are issued in July.

There are 16 Washington high schools approved to offer the IB. More than 6,600 Washington students enrolled in the IB courses in 2009-10. However, not all students seek the full IB Diploma. Some enroll in the Programme but do not complete all of the required components or examinations. According to the IB Organization, 339 Washington students earned the IB Diploma in 2008.

Summary of Bill:

Students who fulfill specified requirements toward completion of an IB Diploma are considered to have satisfied state minimum requirements for graduation from a public high school, except that:

1. the requirement for students to meet the standard on state assessments still applies to the IB students; and
2. laws requiring students to study the United States and Washington Constitutions as a prerequisite for graduation still apply to the IB students, but the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction may adopt a rule allowing the IB students to meet the prerequisite through non-credit based study.

School districts may require the IB students to complete additional local graduation requirements before issuing a high school diploma, but are encouraged to waive local requirements for students to pursue an IB Diploma.

To receive a high school diploma under the bill, students must:

- complete and pass all required IB courses;
- submit and pass all internal assessments;
- successfully complete all required projects and products; and
- complete the final examinations administered by the IB Organization in all required subjects.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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