

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5226

As of February 9, 2011

Title: An act relating to science end-of-course assessments.

Brief Description: Regarding science end-of-course assessments.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/24/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Except for some students receiving special education, students must meet the state standard on the statewide high school assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics to obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). Beginning with the graduating class of 2013 a student must also meet the state standards in science to obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) and graduate from high school. A student may use the statewide assessments, retakes of the assessment, or approved alternative assessments to demonstrate achievement of the state academic standards.

The 2010 supplemental operating budget specified that the funds allocated to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for the statewide assessment system included amounts for OSPI, with the State Board of Education, to develop a statewide high school end-of-course (EOC) assessment to measure student achievement of the state science standards in biology. The assessment is to be implemented statewide in the 2011-12 school year. OSPI was directed to recommend by December 1, 2010, whether additional EOCs in science should be developed and, if so, in which content areas. OSPI has recommended phasing-in two additional EOCs – the first in physical science in 2015 and the second in integrated science in 2016.

Summary of Bill: The requirement for a student to meet the state standards in science is changed from the graduating class of 2013 to the graduating class of 2017 to obtain a meet the state standards and obtain a CAA. Beginning in 2017, a student may use the the biology EOC, retakes of the assessment, or approved alternative assessments to demonstrate

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achievement of the state academic standards. Beginning with the graduating class of 2018 a student may use either the biology or physical science EOC, retakes, or approved alternative assessments to demonstrate achievement of the state standards. Beginning with the graduating class of 2019 a student may use either the biology, physical science, or integrated science EOC, retake, or alternative assessment to demonstrate achievement of the state standards. A score of three on the AP examinations in biology, chemistry, environmental science, or physics may be used as an alternative assessment for the science portion of the statewide assessment.

OSPI is authorized to develop statewide EOCs in biology, physical science, and integrated science to measure the state science standards in those content areas in addition to systems, inquiry, and application. The biology EOC must be administered beginning in the 2011-12 school year; the physical science EOC must be administered beginning in the 2014-15 school year; and the integrated science EOC must be administered beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The integrated science EOC must measure selected state standards for life, physical, and earth and space sciences. OSPI must take steps to ensure that the language of the assessments is responsive to a diverse student population. Technical changes are also made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We need to be fair to our students. Students are feeling anxious and stressed with the current graduation requirements and to add science next year will only increase this. Professional development in math and science has been and is being significantly cut while at the same time we are putting in place new science standards and adding a high-stakes science test. We need to strike a better balance. The comprehensive assessment this year will be assessing the old science standards. However, if we institute the Biology EOC next year it will be on the new standards. We need to give teachers time to modify and align the curriculum for students to be successful and give students sufficient time to have an opportunity to learn the new science standards. The system will have a chance to catch up if we introduce the Biology EOC in 2017 instead of 2013. Additionally, the group that developed the Common Core Standards in Language Arts and Mathematics intend to develop standards in science and this timeline will allow Washington to take advantage of that. We support expanding the science subjects that will be tested because we don't want to send the message that the other sciences are not valued. You need to thoroughly review the use of assessments. Be bold and put on the table the savings that could be achieved by suspending the assessment requirements for high school graduation.

CON: We do not think that delaying the science assessment is in the best interests of our students or good for instilling long-term support for our schools. Washington has been working so hard to move toward a meaningful high school diploma and now you are retreating on the diploma requirements. We are slipping behind our national and international

competitors. We need to step up on STEM education not back down. Our reading and writing assessments have produced strong improvements in student scores and most of our students are meeting those standards. Polls show that voters think that we should stay with the required math and science assessments. A delay alone will not help – there needs to be a comprehensive plan to get our students to meet the state standards. If you make these cuts please reinvest the money back into programs that help students engage in science.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Alan Burke, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Jennifer Shaw, Mike Hagadone, Washington Association of Secondary School Principals; Maren Johnson, Chimacum School District; Dan Steele, WA Association of School Administrators; Beth Flynn, mom of pre-calculus high school student; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.

CON: Steve Mullin, WA Roundtable; Lisa Macfarlane, League of Education Voters; Lew McMurrin, WA Technology Industry Association; Tim Chalberg, Jim Kainber, Stand for Children; Chad Magendanz, Issaquah School District; Ramona Hattendorf, Washington State PTA; Brad Burnham, WA State Board of Education.