
SENATE BILL 6314

State of Washington

62nd Legislature

2012 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe, Rolfes, Chase, Pridemore, and Shin

Read first time 01/17/12. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to the statewide high school assessment in science;
2 amending RCW 28A.655.068; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** In section 1, chapter 22, Laws of 2011 1st
5 sp. sess., the legislature stated that it "does not wish to narrow the
6 high school science curriculum to a singular focus on biology." The
7 legislature finds that the unusual reality of only one science end-of-
8 course test, namely in biology, required for graduation for the class
9 of 2015 does narrow the focus and creates an unintended consequence
10 that runs counter to other educational goals of the state of
11 Washington.

12 The high stakes graduation requirement for biology has resulted in
13 some schools letting go physics instructors in favor of biology
14 instructors. The artificial emphasis on biology caused by the
15 graduation requirement also prevents teachers from spending time
16 teaching nonbiology science subjects that are known to be necessary for
17 students in today's world. Science teachers are experiencing the
18 pressure from the high stakes nature of the one biology test, which

1 creates an overwhelming concentration of staff, time, and resources
2 into that one subject to the exclusion of physical, earth, and space
3 sciences, and engineering.

4 The legislature is also aware that next generation science
5 standards developed from the framework for science education will be
6 released for adoption in the fall of 2012 and that this could make
7 necessary further revisiting of the entire assessment process for
8 science in this state.

9 The legislature therefore intends to set aside the biology
10 end-of-course exam as a graduation requirement until such time as the
11 state has the funding and resources to develop and implement a second
12 science end-of-course or integrated science exam or until the decision
13 is made about how to assess the next generation science standards,
14 which are being released for consideration for adoption in the fall of
15 2012.

16 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.655.068 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 22 s 3 are each
17 amended to read as follows:

18 (1) Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, the statewide high school
19 assessment in science shall be an end-of-course assessment for biology
20 that measures the state standards for life sciences, in addition to
21 systems, inquiry, and application as they pertain to life sciences.

22 (2) The superintendent of public instruction may develop science
23 end-of-course assessments in subjects in addition to biology for
24 purposes of RCW 28A.655.061, when so directed by the legislature.

25 (3) The superintendent of public instruction may participate with
26 consortia of multiple states as common student learning standards and
27 assessments in science are developed. The superintendent of public
28 instruction, in consultation with the state board of education, may
29 modify the essential academic learning requirements and statewide
30 student assessments in science, including the high school assessment,
31 according to the multistate common student learning standards and
32 assessments as long as the education committees of the legislature have
33 opportunities for review before the modifications are adopted, as
34 provided under RCW 28A.655.070.

35 ~~((4) The statewide high school assessment under this section shall~~
36 ~~be used to demonstrate that a student meets the state standards in the~~

1 ~~science content area of the statewide student assessment for purposes~~
2 ~~of RCW 28A.655.061.))~~

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