

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6044

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As of January 27, 2014

**Title:** An act relating to establishing career and technical course equivalencies in science and mathematics.

**Brief Description:** Establishing career and technical course equivalencies in science and mathematics.

**Sponsors:** Senators Litzow, Rivers, McAuliffe, Hobbs, Hargrove, Billig, Eide, Rolfes, Frockt and Conway; by request of Governor Inslee.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/27/14.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Eric Wolf (786-7405)

**Background:** Under current law, school districts are directed to examine their credit-granting policies and award academic credit for career and technical education (CTE) courses that they determine to be equivalent to an academic course. If a student is granted equivalency credit, the student's transcript reflects the academic course number and description.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is directed to provide professional development, technical assistance, and guidance for school districts to accomplish this equivalency crediting. OSPI developed a Course Equivalency Toolkit to assist districts in making these determinations. Although OSPI has a list of CTE courses that school districts consider equivalent, there is no data about the number of such credits actually granted. All decisions about granting equivalency credit are made by local school districts.

In 2011 the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a two-for-one policy, effective with the graduating class of 2016, that allows a student to satisfy two graduation requirements with a single CTE equivalent course, thereby freeing up room in the student's schedule for other courses. The current requirement for the graduating class of 2016 is three mathematics credits and two science credits, one of which must be a laboratory science. SBE has proposed requiring an additional laboratory science credit.

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*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.*

**Summary of Bill:** OSPI, in consultation with one or more technical working groups, must develop curriculum frameworks for a selected list of CTE courses whose content in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is considered equivalent, in full or in part, to science or mathematics courses that meet high school graduation requirements. The course content must be aligned with state learning standards and industry standards. OSPI must submit the course list and curriculum frameworks to SBE for review, public comment, and approval before the 2015-16 school year. The list may be periodically updated thereafter.

Beginning no later than the 2015-16 school year, school districts must grant academic credit in science or mathematics for the CTE courses on the OSPI list; however, they are not limited to the courses on the list.

School districts must ensure that high school students have an opportunity to access the CTE courses in mathematics and science for which the district grants equivalency credit. Students may access these courses at high schools, skill centers, interdistrict cooperatives, or through the Running Start program. Boards of directors of school districts with fewer than 2000 students may apply to SBE for a waiver from this requirement.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after the adjournment of the session in which it is passed, except for section 4 requiring school districts to assure students have access to CTE course equivalencies, which takes effect September 1, 2015.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education are important foundations for a college career. Often, CTE courses are just as rigorous and more engaging to students than traditional math and science courses. There is not just one way students need to learn in high school to reach future success and this bill will help keep students engaged in school. This bill will help students hone relevant, 21st century vocational skills. If we develop standards for course equivalencies, more opportunities will exist for non-traditional students to succeed. This program will make CTE courses much more accessible for children. Sections 4(2) and (3) of the bill imply that districts must provide the course equivalencies; this is not the case, districts are not required to provide such equivalencies to CTE programs. This bill is a concrete step toward more flexibility for students. Only 101 of 295 school districts have a list of CTE course equivalencies in place, so this bill will level the playing field across the state.

OTHER: The bill's waiver process should be streamlined and not as rigorous as the normal process for obtaining a waiver from SBE. In Section 2(3), the reference to the state essential learning requirements should refer to the Common Core requirements and the Next Generation Science Standards. The bill should be expanded to include art and history classes in the course equivalency lists. In Section 4(2), the language should be amended so that school boards do not need to ensure access to CTE courses offsite.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Marcie Maxwell, Governor's Office; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, WA Education Assn.; Sherry Krainick, WA State PTA; Justin Montermini; Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Connie Fletcher, Ben Rarick, SBE; Tim Knue, WA Assn. for CTE; Frank Ordway, League of Education Voters.

OTHER: Jim Kowalkowski, Davenport School District; Marie Sullivan, WA State School Director's Assn.