
HOUSE BILL 1656

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Representatives Stonier, Harris, Pike, Haigh, Wylie, Orwall, Hunt, Farrell, Sawyer, Roberts, Ormsby, Jinkins, Bergquist, Fey, Ryu, Moscoso, Freeman, and Pollet

Read first time 02/04/13. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing statewide high school graduation
2 requirements that permit increased flexibility for students to select
3 courses based on their interests and plans; amending RCW 28A.230.090
4 and 28A.150.220; and creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature maintains its commitment
7 to ensure that all students have an equitable opportunity to complete
8 a meaningful high school diploma and graduate from high school ready
9 for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and
10 citizenship, and equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner.

11 (2) The legislature believes that students should be encouraged and
12 have sufficient flexibility to explore their options and take courses
13 in high school based on their individual interests and plans. The
14 legislature also recognizes the importance and responsibility of school
15 boards to tailor graduation requirements to local needs and goals.

16 (3) Therefore, the legislature intends to focus required courses
17 for high school graduation on the core, foundational knowledge and
18 skills that undergird career and college readiness, and leave

1 additional decisions about course selection to students, parents, and
2 local communities.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.230.090 and 2011 c 203 s 2 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 (1) The state board of education shall establish high school
6 graduation requirements or equivalencies for students as provided in
7 this section, except as provided in RCW 28A.230.122 and except those
8 equivalencies established by local high schools or school districts
9 under RCW 28A.230.097. The purpose of a high school diploma is to
10 declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education,
11 gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to
12 be a lifelong learner. Beginning with the graduating class of 2017,
13 the credit and course distribution requirements established by the
14 state board for high school graduation may not exceed the requirements
15 under this section.

16 (a) Any course in Washington state history and government used to
17 fulfill high school graduation requirements shall consider including
18 information on the culture, history, and government of the American
19 Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state.

20 (b) The certificate of academic achievement requirements under RCW
21 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement requirements
22 under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a public high
23 school but are not the only requirements for graduation.

24 (c) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board's
25 high school graduation requirements for a high school and beyond plan
26 shall remain at the local level.

27 ~~(2)(a) ((In recognition of the statutory authority of the state~~
28 ~~board of education to establish and enforce minimum high school~~
29 ~~graduation requirements, the state board shall periodically reevaluate~~
30 ~~the graduation requirements and shall report such findings to the~~
31 ~~legislature in a timely manner as determined by the state board.~~

32 ~~(b) The state board shall reevaluate the graduation requirements~~
33 ~~for students enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous career and~~
34 ~~technical education programs, particularly those programs that lead to~~
35 ~~a certificate or credential that is state or nationally recognized.~~
36 ~~The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students enrolled in~~
37 ~~these programs have sufficient opportunity to earn a certificate of~~

1 ~~academic achievement, complete the program and earn the program's~~
2 ~~certificate or credential, and complete other state and local~~
3 ~~graduation requirements.~~

4 ~~(c) The state board shall forward any proposed changes to the high~~
5 ~~school graduation requirements to the education committees of the~~
6 ~~legislature for review and to the quality education council established~~
7 ~~under RCW 28A.290.010. The legislature shall have the opportunity to~~
8 ~~act during a regular legislative session before the changes are adopted~~
9 ~~through administrative rule by the state board. Changes that have a~~
10 ~~fiscal impact on school districts, as identified by a fiscal analysis~~
11 ~~prepared by the office of the superintendent of public instruction,~~
12 ~~shall take effect only if formally authorized and funded by the~~
13 ~~legislature through the omnibus appropriations act or other enacted~~

14 legislation)) The state board shall establish the following credit and
15 course distribution requirements beginning with the graduating class of
16 2017:

17 (i) Four English credits;

18 (ii) Three mathematics credits, where the content of the third
19 credit is chosen by the student based on the student's interests and
20 high school and beyond plan;

21 (iii) Three social studies credits;

22 (iv) Two science credits;

23 (v) Two credits in health and fitness;

24 (vi) One credit in the arts;

25 (vii) One credit in occupational education; and

26 (viii) Six credits in a career concentration, which is a series of
27 related courses within a career pathway that lead to a specific post
28 high school career or educational outcome chosen by the student based
29 on the student's interests and high school and beyond plan, that may
30 include career and technical education, and are intended to provide a
31 focus for the student's learning.

32 (b) Particularly for students whose high school and beyond plan
33 indicates an intent to enroll directly in a four-year institution of
34 higher education after graduation, the state board may encourage but
35 not require selection of the following courses as the student's career
36 concentration:

37 (i) One additional science credit;

38 (ii) One additional credit in the arts;

1 (iii) Two credits in world languages; and

2 (iv) Two elective credits.

3 (c) The state board shall adopt rules consistent with this section
4 and other applicable state laws defining the minimum content of the
5 required credits and their alignment with the essential academic
6 learning requirements.

7 (3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other
8 than English established (~~by the state board of education~~) under this
9 section or by a local school district, or both, for purposes of high
10 school graduation, students who receive instruction in American sign
11 language or one or more American Indian languages shall be considered
12 to have satisfied the state or local school district graduation
13 requirement for instruction in one or more languages other than
14 English.

15 (4) If requested by the student and his or her family, a student
16 who has completed high school courses before attending high school
17 shall be given high school credit which shall be applied to fulfilling
18 high school graduation requirements if:

19 (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic
20 level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth
21 grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing
22 the same course requirements and examinations as the high school
23 students enrolled in the class; or

24 (b) The academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for
25 seventh and eighth grade classes and the course would qualify for high
26 school credit, because the course is similar or equivalent to a course
27 offered at a high school in the district as determined by the school
28 district board of directors.

29 (5) Students who have taken and successfully completed high school
30 courses under the circumstances in subsection (4) of this section shall
31 not be required to take an additional competency examination or perform
32 any other additional assignment to receive credit.

33 (6) At the college or university level, five quarter or three
34 semester hours equals one high school credit.

35 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.150.220 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 27 s 1 are each
36 amended to read as follows:

37 (1) In order for students to have the opportunity to develop the

1 basic education knowledge and skills under RCW 28A.150.210, school
2 districts must provide instruction of sufficient quantity and quality
3 and give all students ~~((the))~~ an equitable opportunity to complete
4 graduation requirements that are intended to prepare them for
5 postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship. The
6 program established under this section shall be the minimum
7 instructional program of basic education offered by school districts.

8 (2) Each school district shall make available to students the
9 following minimum instructional offering each school year:

10 (a) For students enrolled in grades one through twelve, at least a
11 district-wide annual average of one thousand hours, which shall be
12 increased to at least one thousand eighty instructional hours for
13 students enrolled in each of grades seven through twelve and at least
14 one thousand instructional hours for students in each of grades one
15 through six according to an implementation schedule adopted by the
16 legislature, but not before the 2014-15 school year; and

17 (b) For students enrolled in kindergarten, at least four hundred
18 fifty instructional hours, which shall be increased to at least one
19 thousand instructional hours according to the implementation schedule
20 under RCW 28A.150.315.

21 (3) The instructional program of basic education provided by each
22 school district shall include:

23 (a) Instruction in the essential academic learning requirements
24 under RCW 28A.655.070;

25 (b) Instruction that provides all students ~~((the))~~ an equitable
26 opportunity to complete ~~((twenty-four credits for))~~ the high school
27 graduation~~(, subject to a phased-in implementation of the twenty-four~~
28 ~~credits as established by the legislature. Course distribution~~
29 ~~requirements may be established by the state board of education))~~
30 requirements under RCW 28A.230.090;

31 (c) If the essential academic learning requirements include a
32 requirement of languages other than English, the requirement may be met
33 by students receiving instruction in one or more American Indian
34 languages;

35 (d) Supplemental instruction and services for underachieving
36 students through the learning assistance program under RCW 28A.165.005
37 through 28A.165.065;

1 (e) Supplemental instruction and services for eligible and enrolled
2 students whose primary language is other than English through the
3 transitional bilingual instruction program under RCW 28A.180.010
4 through 28A.180.080;

5 (f) The opportunity for an appropriate education at public expense
6 as defined by RCW 28A.155.020 for all eligible students with
7 disabilities as defined in RCW 28A.155.020; and

8 (g) Programs for highly capable students under RCW 28A.185.010
9 through 28A.185.030.

10 (4) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to require
11 individual students to attend school for any particular number of hours
12 per day or to take any particular courses.

13 (5) Each school district's kindergarten through twelfth grade basic
14 educational program shall be accessible to all students who are five
15 years of age, as provided by RCW 28A.225.160, and less than twenty-one
16 years of age and shall consist of a minimum of one hundred eighty
17 school days per school year in such grades as are conducted by a school
18 district, and one hundred eighty half-days of instruction, or
19 equivalent, in kindergarten, to be increased to a minimum of one
20 hundred eighty school days per school year according to the
21 implementation schedule under RCW 28A.150.315. However, effective May
22 1, 1979, a school district may schedule the last five school days of
23 the one hundred and eighty day school year for noninstructional
24 purposes in the case of students who are graduating from high school,
25 including, but not limited to, the observance of graduation and early
26 release from school upon the request of a student, and all such
27 students may be claimed as a full-time equivalent student to the extent
28 they could otherwise have been so claimed for the purposes of RCW
29 28A.150.250 and 28A.150.260.

30 (6) Nothing in this section precludes a school district from
31 enriching the instructional program of basic education, such as
32 offering additional instruction or providing additional services,
33 programs, or activities that the school district determines to be
34 appropriate for the education of the school district's students.

35 (7) The state board of education shall adopt rules to implement and
36 ensure compliance with the program requirements imposed by this

1 section, RCW 28A.150.250 and 28A.150.260, and such related supplemental
2 program approval requirements as the state board may establish.

--- END ---