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**HOUSE BILL 1591**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Ortiz-Self, Johnson, Reykdal, Moscoso, Pollet, Santos, Bergquist, Peterson, S. Hunt, Sells, Gregerson, and Wylie

AN ACT Relating to high school and beyond plans; amending RCW 28A.230.090; adding a new section to chapter 28A.630 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that the career and college ready graduation requirements directed in chapter 217, Laws of 2014 substantially increase the importance of the high school and beyond plan in a student's academic career. The legislature finds that the high school and beyond plan is integrally connected to the student's choices of mathematics and science courses needed for graduation, and to the personalized pathways chosen by the student to pursue postsecondary career or educational goals. The legislature further finds that the high school and beyond plan is not a one-time project required for graduation, but a living document begun before high school, that is revised throughout the following grades to enable preparation for success in life. The legislature further finds that all high school students should have access to a high school and beyond plan.

(2) Therefore, the legislature intends to establish the minimum components of a high school and beyond plan, prepared by and for each student, for a successful transition from high school to college and career. The legislature intends to encourage school districts to build upon and enhance the minimum components of a high school and beyond plan to best serve the interests of their students. The legislature further intends to protect local decision making in the process by which the high school and beyond plan is developed. The legislature further intends to provide support to school districts through the office of the superintendent of public instruction in the development and implementation of high quality high school and beyond plans.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.230.090 and 2014 c 217 s 202 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The state board of education shall establish high school graduation requirements or equivalencies for students, except as provided in RCW 28A.230.122 and except those equivalencies established by local high schools or school districts under RCW 28A.230.097. The purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner.

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

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

(c) Each student shall have a high school and beyond plan to guide the student's high school experience and prepare the student for postsecondary education or training and career. A high school and beyond plan must be initiated for each student during the eighth grade, and in preparation for initiating that plan each student shall first be administered a career interest and skills inventory. The plan must be updated during the high school grades to review transcripts, assess progress toward identified goals, and revise as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs. The high school and beyond plan must include the following minimum elements:

(i) Identification of career goals, aided by a skills and interest assessment;

(ii) Identification of educational goals;

(iii) A four-year plan for course-taking that fulfills state and local graduation requirements and aligns with the student's career and educational goals;

(iv) Identification of assessments needed to graduate from high school and achieve the postsecondary goals chosen in the high school and beyond plan.

(d) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board's high school graduation requirements for a high school and beyond plan shall remain at the local level. A district may provide for additional, local requirements for a high school and beyond plan as it may identify to serve the needs and interests of its students and the purposes of this section.

(e) Effective with the graduating class of 2015, the state board of education may not establish a requirement for students to complete a culminating project for graduation.

((~~(d)~~))(f)(i) The state board of education shall adopt rules to implement the career and college ready graduation requirement proposal adopted under board resolution on November 10, 2010, and revised on January 9, 2014, to take effect beginning with the graduating class of 2019 or as otherwise provided in this subsection (1)((~~(d)~~))(f). The rules must include authorization for a school district to waive up to two credits for individual students based on unusual circumstances and in accordance with written policies that must be adopted by each board of directors of a school district that grants diplomas. The rules must also provide that the content of the third credit of mathematics and the content of the third credit of science may be chosen by the student based on the student's interests and high school and beyond plan with agreement of the student's parent or guardian or agreement of the school counselor or principal.

(ii) School districts may apply to the state board of education for a waiver to implement the career and college ready graduation requirement proposal beginning with the graduating class of 2020 or 2021 instead of the graduating class of 2019. In the application, a school district must describe why the waiver is being requested, the specific impediments preventing timely implementation, and efforts that will be taken to achieve implementation with the graduating class proposed under the waiver. The state board of education shall grant a waiver under this subsection (1)((~~(d)~~))(f) to an applying school district at the next subsequent meeting of the board after receiving an application.

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

(b) The state board shall reevaluate the graduation requirements for students enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous career and technical education programs, particularly those programs that lead to a certificate or credential that is state or nationally recognized. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students enrolled in these programs have sufficient opportunity to earn a certificate of academic achievement, complete the program and earn the program's certificate or credential, and complete other state and local graduation requirements.

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

(3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other than English established by the state board of education or a local school district, or both, for purposes of high school graduation, students who receive instruction in American sign language or one or more American Indian languages shall be considered to have satisfied the state or local school district graduation requirement for instruction in one or more languages other than English.

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

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

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

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

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.630 RCW to read as follows:

The superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with a nonprofit organization representing school counselors, shall develop and disseminate an inventory of best practices for high quality high school and beyond plans, and provide assistance to school districts in the development and implementation of the plans. The superintendent of public instruction is encouraged to include at least one online tool that can be used to make and reflect progress, revisions, and transitions that occur from the eighth grade, when the high school and beyond plan is first initiated, through the twelfth grade. The superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with the state board of education, shall also identify barriers to high quality high school and beyond plans and the means of addressing the barriers in a manner that promotes equitable access to high quality plans for all students.

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