

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2214

As of Second Reading

Title: An act relating to increasing academic rigor and streamlining assessment requirements for high school students.

Brief Description: Increasing academic rigor and streamlining assessment requirements for high school students.

Sponsors: Representatives Reykdal, Taylor, Pettigrew, Shea, Gregory, G. Hunt, Pollet, Holy, Ryu, Haler, Sells, Santos, Farrell, Tarleton, Bergquist, Appleton, Moscoso, Takko, Peterson, Dunshee, Riccelli, Sawyer, Tharinger, Condotta, Gregerson, Stanford, Robinson, Fitzgibbon, Kilduff, Orwall, Ortiz-Self, Van De Wege, Goodman, Kirby, Blake, Wylie, Moeller, Fey, McBride, Hurst, Schmick, S. Hunt, Griffey and Young; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 4/21/15.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the requirement that students take and pass the Biology end-of-course (EOC) in order to earn a certificate of academic achievement (CAA) and graduate, and provides for a two-year transition period following development of a comprehensive science assessment, after which students may be required to meet a standard in order to earn a CAA.
- Discontinues administration of the 10th grade reading and writing and mathematics assessments after the 2014-15 school year, and eliminates existing alternative assessment options.
- Provides that, beginning with the graduating class of 2016, a student who earns a score of 3 or 4 on the 11th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) English Language Arts and mathematics assessments will earn a CAA.
- Authorizes students who do not score a 3 or a 4 on the 11th grade SBAC assessments to earn a CAA by taking and passing a "locally determined course" in that subject or subjects.
- Adds specificity to High School and Beyond Plan requirements.

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.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195) and Jessica Harrell (786-7349).

Background:

Statewide Student Assessment System.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), is authorized to maintain and revise a statewide academic assessment system to measure student knowledge and skills on state learning standards and to use for purposes of state and federal accountability. The state assessment system must cover the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science for elementary, middle, and high school years. The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires states to assess students based on state learning standards in reading and mathematics in each of grades 3-8 and one high school grade, as well as in at least one grade in elementary, middle, and high school in science.

Most recently, high school mathematics has been assessed using end-of-course tests (EOCs) in Algebra I and Geometry, while a 10th grade reading and writing assessment has been utilized. In 2011 legislation directed that high school science be assessed using a Biology EOC. Subsequently, the Legislature expressed intent to transition from a Biology EOC to a comprehensive science assessment.

In 2013 the SPI was directed to implement student assessments developed with a multistate consortium in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, beginning in the 2014-15 school year. (Washington is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, known as SBAC.) The SPI was also directed to use test items from the SBAC assessments to develop a 10th grade ELA assessment and modify the Algebra I and Geometry EOCs for use through the transition period.

The SBE is responsible for establishing the performance scores that students must meet on state assessments. By the end of the 2014-15 school year, the SBE must establish performance scores for the assessments used during the transition period, as well as the SBAC assessments. In setting scores for the high school SBAC assessments, the SBE must review the experience during the transition period, examine scores used in other states for the SBAC assessments, including states that require passage of an 11th grade assessment for graduation. The scores established for purposes of graduation may be different from the scores used for the purpose of determining career and college readiness.

High School Graduation.

A Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) or a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) is one of the requirements for graduation from a Washington public high school. To obtain a CAA, a student must meet state standards on required assessments. Students requiring special education who are not appropriately assessed by the state assessment system, even with accommodations, may earn a CIA via a variety of ways to demonstrate skills and abilities commensurate with their individual education programs.

Since the graduating class of 2008, Washington students have been required to meet the state standard on the assessment in reading and writing to obtain a CAA and graduate from high school. Students in the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014 have also had to meet the standard in at least one of the mathematics EOCs. Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students will have to meet the standard on the state assessment in reading, writing, at least one of the mathematics EOCs, and the Biology EOC for high school graduation. Beginning with the graduating class of 2019, the SBAC assessments in the ELA and mathematics will be used to demonstrate that students meet the state standard in those subjects.

Below is a chart illustrating the assessments required for the graduating class of 2015 and beyond:

Graduating Class	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
2015	10th Grade Reading & Writing	Algebra I EOC <i>Or</i> Geometry EOC	Biology EOC
2016	10th Grade Reading & Writing <i>Or</i> 11th Grade ELA (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium or SBAC)	Algebra I EOC <i>Or</i> Geometry EOC <i>Or</i> 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC
2017	10th Grade ELA <i>Or</i> 11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	Algebra I EOC <i>Or</i> Geometry EOC <i>Or</i> 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC
2018	10th Grade ELA <i>Or</i> 11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	Algebra I EOC <i>Or</i> Geometry EOC <i>Or</i> 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC
2019	11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC

Alternative Assessment Options.

Alternative assessment options exist to earn a CAA for those who have taken an assessment at least once. These include:

- grade comparison;
- earning a high enough score on the SAT or ACT;

- earning a high enough score on an Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) exam; and
- collection of evidence, scored at the state level or by regional panels of educators.

There are also provisions for waiving specific requirements pertaining to the CAA and the CIA for students who transferred to a Washington public school in their junior or senior year or who have special, unavoidable circumstances.

Assessments, Transition Courses, and College Placement.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and Washington's public baccalaureate institutions have signed agreements on the use of the SBAC assessments as evidence of college readiness. College ready scores of 3 or 4 on these assessments will allow first year college students who have been admitted to one of Washington's public colleges or universities to be placed into entry-level college mathematics and English courses without further placement testing. Students must take placement exams for higher level course placement, such as a calculus track.

In addition, transition courses are being developed and piloted in English Language Arts and mathematics for students who score a one or a two on the assessment. These courses will develop college and career readiness. A senior in high school who scores below a college-ready level on an SBAC assessment will be able to enroll in the transition course and, if he or she earns a B or better, be placed into an entry-level college course in that subject.

High School and Beyond Plan.

One of the state graduation requirements is the completion of a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP). State Board of Education rules provide that each student shall have a HSBP for their high school experience, including what they expect to do the year following graduation.

The content of the plan and whether a student's plan meets the requirement is determined at the district level. A student's high school transcript must contain a notation as to whether the student met the HSBP requirement.

Summary of Bill:

High School Graduation: Assessments and Transition Courses.

Changes are made with respect to the high school graduation assessment requirements in science, ELA, and mathematics, as well as to the alternative assessment options.

For the near term, the statewide high school assessment in science will continue to be the Biology EOC. However, the requirement that a student take and pass the Biology EOC in order to earn a CAA is eliminated. After the SPI has adopted a comprehensive science assessment, there is a two-year transition period. During the first year, the comprehensive assessment is piloted, and then administered statewide in the second year. Until the conclusion of the transition period, the Biology EOC will remain. After the adoption and

transition to the new comprehensive science assessment, students may be required to meet a standard to earn a CAA.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2016, a student who earns a score of 3 or 4 on the 11th grade ELA and mathematics SBAC assessments earns a CAA. After the 2014-15 school year, the 10th grade assessments in reading/writing, ELA, and mathematics are not administered. An exception is included for students in the graduating class of 2016 who have met the state standard on the 10th grade mathematics assessment, and they may earn a CAA.

A student who does not earn a level 3 or 4 in one or the other or both content areas may retake the assessment in that content area once in his or her senior year at no cost and, if the student scores a 3 or a 4 on the retake, will earn a CAA. Students who achieve the standard but want to improve their score may retake the assessment but must pay the cost of the retake.

Students who do not earn a score of 3 or 4 on the 11th grade ELA and mathematics SBAC assessments, but who take and pass a locally determined course in ELA or mathematics, earn a CAA. Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, students in grade 12 who have not earned a score of 3 or 4, or who have not earned a CIA under the special education chapter of the school code, must take and pass a locally determined course in the content area in which the student was not successful.

The locally determined course must be rigorous and consistent with the student's educational and career goals identified in the HSBP, and may include career and technical education equivalencies. A course is deemed "rigorous" if it is at a higher course level than the student's most recent coursework in a content area in which the student received a passing grade of C or higher, or its equivalent.

When available, school districts should prioritize enrolling students in high school transition courses. A "transition course" is defined as an ELA, mathematics, or science course offered in high school whose successful completion will ensure college-level placement at Washington's state universities, regional universities, The Evergreen State College, and community and technical colleges. (A student's successful completion of a transition course does not entitle the student to be admitted to any institution of higher education.) These transition courses must satisfy core or elective credit graduation requirements established by the SBE.

All of the existing alternative assessment options are eliminated.

If a student earns a level 3 or 4 on the ELA and mathematics SBAC assessments, the student's high school transcript shall include a notation of "career and college ready high honors."

High School and Beyond Plan.

Each student must have a HSBP to guide the high school experience and prepare the student for postsecondary education or training and career. A HSBP must be initiated during the 8th grade, following administration of a career interest and skills inventory. The HSBP must be

updated annually during high school to review transcripts, assess progress toward goals, and revise as necessary.

School districts are encouraged to involve parents and guardians in the process of developing and updating the HSBP.

Certain minimum elements are specified, but the decision on whether a student has met this graduation requirement remains a local decision and the district may provide for additional, local requirements. The HSBP minimum requirements include:

- identification of career goals, aided by a skills and interest assessment;
- identification of educational goals;
- a four-year plan for course-taking that fulfills state and local graduation requirements and aligns with career and educational goals;
- identification of assessments if needed to graduate from high school and achieve the chosen postsecondary goals; and
- by the end of the 12th grade, a current resume or activity log that provides a written compilation of the student's education, and work experience, and any community service and how the school district has recognized the community service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill makes substantive change for the better. The system currently in place consists of layer upon layer, including seven different tests. The state spends \$70-\$80 million per year to score these tests, and districts spend money as well. There is a better way. It is time to bring the number down from seven to three, which will realize a savings to the state of \$30 million per year. Additionally, there will be savings to be had from not having to pay for students to take remedial courses when they reach college. Girls, women, and people of color have significant drop-out rates due to exit exams. About 53 percent of the drop outs occur in the senior year. There is no senior plan for these students. The bill addresses the problem in a comprehensive way: bringing the number of tests down to three; providing for rigorous courses that students can take in their senior year if they don't pass; graduating more students; saving the money that would be required for collection of evidence (COE) for 40,000 to 55,000 students at \$400 per COE; and saving the money that would otherwise be spent on remediation at the college level.

The transition courses are already articulated. The reasons students end up in remedial courses in college are two-fold: (1) they didn't take the right course; or (2) they didn't take a mathematics course as a senior, and therefore are taking the placement test after 15 months of

not focusing on mathematics. Under this bill, more students will be taking mathematics in their senior year.

There is a need for a system that helps students. The current system is too confusing and takes too much time. The assessments are not the only means of making sure there is adequate rigor. For instance, the Legislature has put in place the 24-credit requirement. The Class of 2016 will get a break, which is good. There is a need for some work on the "C" or better language with respect to the locally determined courses. Section 9, pertaining to academic acceleration, also needs work. The improvements made in this bill will reduce the number of students who miss career and technical education (CTE) in order to test.

Counselors support the bill. It maintains rigor, and will allow more students to graduate career and college ready rather than drop out. In this way, it will make a huge difference in the lives of students. The High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) language is critical.

Thanks is given for getting rid of the Biology End of Course exam (EOC), and the hope is that this will be done during the regular session and doesn't wait until May or June. Districts are spending local money that could be saved if done sooner. The rest of the bill also has the support of the Tacoma School District.

One assistant principal has reported that only one day in the remaining days of school in her building will be "normal" and not taken up with testing. Over 2,000 students have not met standard on the Biology EOC/COE and are in danger of not graduating this year.

(In support with concerns) The State Board of Education (SBE) supports ending the Biology EOC, and supports the additions regarding the HSBP. There is concern that the bill moves too quickly and too loosely. RCW 28A.320.208 provides that students will be told what is required. Requiring passing the Biology EOC is not a problem but with respect to other pieces of the bill caution is urged. About two-thirds of students will not reach the level 3 on the Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium (SBACs) which have just been adopted. Eliminating the alternatives at this point gets it backwards.

(Opposed) Although the bill is opposed, there are pieces that are liked. The meaningful senior year is a good addition, however, there is insufficient clarity regarding locally determined and transition courses and by what objective standards will they be judged. The bill removes all of the options, such as the ACT, SAT, AP, etc., and those should remain as options. In addition, there is nothing in the bill with respect to data tracking.

(Other) The Washington Education Association (WEA) believes teachers know their students best, and are better judges than assessments. This is not the "de-link" that WEA advocated, but it is better than the current system. It emphasizes that students must work hard and do well. The HSBP in the 8th grade is applauded, but there should be more counselors in the schools particularly small schools. The bill is a great first step.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Reykdal, prime sponsor; Marcia Fromhold, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Alan Burke, Washington State School Directors Association; Amy Brackenbury, Washington School Counselors Association;

Charlie Brown, Tacoma Public Schools; Scott Seaman, Association of Washington School Principals; and Tim Knue, Washington Association of Career and Technical Education.

(In support with concerns) Ben Rarick, State Board of Education.

(Opposed) Frank Ordway, League of Education Voters.

(Other) Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.