

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2EHB 2214

As Reported by House Committee On: Appropriations

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, 1/18/16, 1/21/16 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Discontinues administration of the 10th grade reading, writing, and mathematics assessments after the 2015-16 school year, and eliminates all but one existing alternative assessment option.
- Establishes that, beginning with the graduating class of 2017, 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 certificate of academic achievement (CAA).
- Authorizes students who take but do not earn a level 3 or 4 score on the 11th grade SBAC assessments to earn a CAA by earning an equivalent score on the SAT or ACT, taking and passing a "locally determined course," or completing a dual credit course in which the student earns college credit.
- Eliminates the requirement that students take and pass the Biology end-of-course-exam in order to earn a CAA and graduate, provides for a two-year transition period following development of a comprehensive science

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assessment, after which students will be required to meet standards in order to earn a CAA, and includes an emergency clause making these provisions effective immediately.

- Provides that a student in the class of 2017 or a prior year may earn a CAA by means of: (1) the assessments and alternatives that were available to the particular class if the student has met the standard or satisfied the alternative before the beginning of the 2016-17 school year; or (2) by scoring a 3 or 4 on the SBAC, earning an equivalent ACT or SAT score, taking and passing a locally determined course, or completing a dual credit course in which the student earns college credit.
- Adds specificity to High School and Beyond Plan requirements.
- Establishes study and report requirements regarding transition and locally determined courses, as well as student outcomes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Dunshee, Chair; Ormsby, Vice Chair; Buys, Cody, Condotta, Dent, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Harris, Hudgins, G. Hunt, S. Hunt, Jinkins, MacEwen, Magendanz, Pettigrew, Robinson, Sawyer, Schmick, Senn, Springer, Sullivan, Taylor, Tharinger, Van Werven and Walkinshaw.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Wilcox, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Kagi and Stokesbary.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Lytton.

Staff: 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 it 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 have been assessed in Washington 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. In accordance with statutory requirements, the SBE has established 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 Requirements Prior to 2015.

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 standards on the assessment in reading and 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.

Current High School Graduation Requirements.

The enactment of Senate Bill 6145 (chapter 42, laws of 2015, 3rd sp. s.) delayed for two years the requirement that a student meet the state standard on the statewide science assessment or an alternative in order to earn a CAA for purposes of high school graduation. With that change, beginning with the class of 2017, 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 2016 and beyond.

Graduating Class	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
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2016	10th Grade Reading & Writing Or 11th Grade ELA (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium or SBAC)	Algebra I EOC Or Geometry EOC Or 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	No assessment required for graduation
2017 and 2018	10th Grade ELA Or 11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	Algebra I EOC Or Geometry EOC Or 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC
2019 Onward	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 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.

High School and Beyond Plan.

One of the state graduation requirements is the completion of a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP). The SBE 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 Substitute Bill:

High School Graduation: Assessments and Alternative Options.

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

Beginning with the graduating class of 2017, a student who earns a level 3 or level 4 score on the 11th grade ELA and mathematics SBAC assessments earns a CAA. After the 2015-16 school year, the 10th grade assessments in reading and writing, ELA, and mathematics are not administered. All of the existing alternative assessment options for earning a CAA are eliminated, except for earning an equivalent score on the SAT or ACT.

A student who does not earn a level 3 or 4 in one or both content areas may retake the assessment in that content area at least once a year at no cost and, if the student earns a 3 or 4 on the retake, he or she will earn a CAA. Students who achieve the standard but want to improve their score may retake the assessment but will be charged a cost determined by the SPI for the retake.

Students who take, but do not earn a level 3 or 4 score on the 11th grade ELA and mathematics SBAC assessments, are provided alternative options for earning a CAA. These students may:

- earn a score on the mathematics, reading or English, or writing portion of the SAT or the ACT that is identified by the SBE as meeting the state standard in the relevant content area of a statewide assessment;
- complete a dual credit course in ELA or mathematics in which the student earns college credit; or
- take and pass a locally determined course in the content area or areas in which they were unsuccessful. 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.

Students who do not participate in the high school ELA or mathematics assessments may utilize one or more of the same alternative options for earning a CAA.

Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, except as provided otherwise, the taking and passing of a locally determined course in the applicable content area is mandatory for students who have not earned a CAA before the beginning of grade 12.

When available, school districts should prioritize enrolling students who must take and pass locally determined courses 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.

The statewide high school assessment in science continues to be the Biology EOC. However, beginning with the class of 2016, 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 will be required to meet the standard on the assessment or take and pass a locally determined course, preferably a transition course, to earn a CAA.

Class of 2017 and Prior Graduating Classes: High School Graduation and Assessment.

Provision is made for the graduating class of 2017, some of whom have already met the standard on the assessments that will no longer be administered, or the alternatives that will no longer be available. In addition to earning a CAA through the options described above for the class of 2017, students in the class of 2017 may earn a CAA if, before beginning the 2016-17 school year, they met the standard on an assessment or alternative being discontinued. A similar provision is made for prior classes.

High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP).

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 eighth grade, following the 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.

A school district that has implemented the 24-credit career and college-ready requirements must update the HSBP for each student in grade 9 who failed to earn a score of level 3 or level 4 on the middle school mathematics assessment for the purpose of ensuring that the student takes one or more credits of mathematics coursework in each of grades 9, 10, and 11. These courses may include career and technical education equivalencies.

Certain minimum elements for an HSPB are specified, but the decision on whether a student has met state-established graduation requirements for an HSPB remains a local decision. Additionally, the district may provide for additional, local HSBP requirements. The statewide minimum requirements for an HSPB 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.

Other Graduation Related Provisions: Alignment of Specific Curricula, High School Transcripts.

Any course in Washington State history and government used to fulfill high school graduation requirements must, in accordance with social studies curriculum requirements adopted in 2015 (*i.e.*, Substitute Senate Bill 5433, enacted as ch. 198, Laws of 2015) include information on the culture, history, and government of the American Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state.

If a student earns a level 3 or 4 score on the ELA and mathematics SBAC assessments, the student's high school transcript must include a notation of "career and college-ready high honors." School districts are encouraged to also include this notation on the student's diploma.

Study and Report Requirements.

The OSPI is required to conduct a study of the locally determined courses in ELA and mathematics that are offered by school districts in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. The study must include an analysis regarding how the transition courses and other locally determined courses are aligned with Washington's learning standards, and also determine whether the state has an adequate number of certificated teachers qualified to teach these courses. A report to the Legislature is required before January 1, 2018.

In addition, beginning in 2019, the SPI, in consultation with the Education Data Center, must annually produce a summary report of the outcomes of high school graduates who earned a CAA. This report must include data identifying students' employment, participation in higher education, and workforce training after a period of one year following graduation. The report must also include data identifying remedial precollege coursework that students take in postsecondary education following graduation. The data included in this report must be disaggregated into the following categories: students who earned a level 3 or level 4 on the SBAC; students who earned a CAA by earning equivalent scores on the SAT or ACT; students who earned a CAA via a transition course; students who earned a CAA by taking another locally determined course; and students who earned a CAA by completing and earning college credit in a dual credit course.

Substitute Bill Compared to Second Engrossed Bill:

The second engrossed bill provided that a student that earned a 3 or 4 on the ELA SBAC assessment earned a certificate of achievement. The substitute bill adds that a score of a 3 or 4 on the mathematics SBAC also earns a CAA. The substitute bill adds that completion of a dual credit course in which the student earns college credit may be a means of earning a CAA. The substitute bill specifies that any course in Washington State history and government that is used to fulfill graduation requirements must include, rather than consider, information on the culture, history, and government of the American Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state. Finally, the substitute bill modifies the intent language and advances the dates established in the original bill by one academic or calendar year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 106, relating to the science assessment, which contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Circumstances have changed since an earlier version of this bill passed the House last year; we have learned additional information about assessments, and the federal government has rewritten its approach to education. However, 95 percent of students must still take assessments and Washington must still have assessment standards and school accountability. This bill is much the same as last year, but adds one more option for students who struggle on assessments in their junior year by allowing students to demonstrate proficiency by using dual credit courses in the relevant subject area. This bill makes clear that students who opt out of assessments still need to demonstrate proficiency through specified alternatives. If this bill is not adopted, the Legislature will need to spend an additional \$32 million per biennium to pay for the collection of evidence process for 40,000 students who do not pass 11th grade math. This bill provides a better and less expensive option using courses that are determined at the local level.

It's long past due that the high school Biology end-of-course test be eliminated as a graduation requirement, and this bill does so. This biology test requirement was delayed for two years last year, but this creates difficult circumstances as the class of 2017 has to meet this requirement, but other classes do not. The notion of expanding alternatives for demonstrating proficiency, including the use of dual credit courses is supported. Assessments should be part of the requirements for earning a diploma, but the state over relies on the collection of evidence process for students. Strengthening the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) is supported. There is concern about how the timing of the bill would affect the class of 2017 if it passes at the end of session. The language in the underlying bill about the use of locally determined courses is too vague and doesn't align with the idea of applying rigorous standards to all students. There is concern about a provision in the substitute bill that might allow students to entirely opt out of the SBAC or whether assessments are required for all. The uniformity requirement of testing for all should be maintained, but alternatives should be bolstered.

This bill has tremendous fiscal savings and there has been an effort to include rigor, and the language of the bill reflects that. The HSPB provisions are expanded, and this is a positive change. There are concerns about the opt-out scenario. The U.S. Department of Education will be making rules for the new Every Student Succeeds Act, but the 95 percent assessment taking requirement appears to remain, and allowing students to opt-out of the test may create problems.

(Opposed) A test-based requirement has long been supported to ensure that no student graduates without the basic skills necessary to succeed in life. Assessments are an objective measure of basic skills that alert schools and teachers to deficiencies that can be remedied. Instead of a basic standard, the bill sets a standard of career and college-readiness. This is a laudable goal, but one that is extremely challenging. Students have refused to take the SBAC and this made assessment data less useful. A large number of students will not meet the standard of career and college-readiness in math, and the bill will direct these students to a locally determined course that is not comparable in rigor and has no objective measurement. The system should have a reasonable standard that students can achieve now, with career and college-readiness implemented when the system is ready. A mandatory test-based graduation requirement with standards that students can meet should be retained, but this bill ends that. The SBE should continue to establish cut scores and the often-changing assessment system should be left in its current form.

Assessment streamlining and cost savings should be supported, but the bill proposes using single standardized test scores to make high stakes decisions about remedial course work in the 12th grade. It previously appeared as if this approach might work, but administration of the SBAC last spring make it clear that this proposal is not feasible and might harm students. The SBAC test scores were not available until October, and there were many inequities and bugs in the test implementation of tests that render the results unreliable, inaccurate, and an unfair measure of student skill. The professional judgment of teachers to identify needed supports should be respected, rather than using a single test score using limited and unreliable data. Kids should be able to show proficiency through successful course completion, not through a standardized test or alternatives to that test.

(Other) The current assessment system is confusing, time-consuming, costly, and it doesn't guide students and help to increase their skills in areas in which they are deficient. A bill that de-links the tests from graduation requirements and requires students who do not earn a level 3 or 4 assessment score to take a locally determined course, which they must pass, in their areas of weakness would be preferred.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Reykdal, prime sponsor; Betsy P. Elgar, Real Estates Free and Clear; and Alan Burke, Washington State School Directors' Association.

(Opposed) Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable; and Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.

(Other) Marcia Fromhold, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Ben Rarick, State Board of Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.