
Education Committee

HB 2556

Brief Description: Eliminating the certificate of academic achievement as a requirement for high school graduation.

Sponsors: Representatives S. Hunt, Appleton, Ormsby and Scott; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates provisions establishing, governing, and mandating the earning of a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) or a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) as a requirement for graduating from a public high school.
- Establishes that, beginning in the 2016-17 school year, 12th grade students who have not met the state standard on the English Language Arts or mathematics assessments must, to qualify for graduation, take and pass a locally determined course in the content area in which the student was not successful.
- Discontinues administration of the 10th grade reading and writing and mathematics assessments and eliminates all existing alternative assessment options.
- Modifies provisions governing the high school assessment in science by removing a provision requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to implement a two-year transition period after the SPI has adopted a comprehensive science assessment.
- Adds specificity to High School and Beyond Plans.
- Makes other changes related to the statewide student assessment system and graduation requirements.

Hearing Date: 1/26/16

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

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.

High School Graduation Requirements - General Provisions, Role of State Board of Education.

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 statewide 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. High school transcripts include a notation of whether the student has earned a CAA or CIA.

An additional state requirement for graduation is the completion of a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP). Rules adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) provide that each student must 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.

The SBE has statutory authority to establish and enforce minimum high school graduation requirements and to periodically reevaluate the requirements. Local school district boards of directors, however, may adopt local graduation requirements that are in excess of state requirements. A student who completes and passes all required International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma programme courses as scored at the local level and satisfies other requirements is considered to have satisfied state minimum requirements for graduation, but he or she must still earn a CAA or CIA to be eligible to graduate from a public high school.

School districts that operate a high school must have policies and procedures that permit students who are receiving special education or related services under an individualized education program and will continue to receive these services between the ages of 18 and 21, to receive a certificate of attendance and participate in the graduation ceremony after four years of high school attendance. Participation in a graduation ceremony and receipt of a certificate of attendance may not be construed as the student's receipt of a high school diploma or a CIA.

Statewide Student Assessment System and Alternative Assessment Options.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the SBE, is authorized to maintain and revise a statewide academic assessment system to measure student knowledge and skills on state learning standards and for purposes of state and federal accountability. The statewide 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. In addition to being used for purposes of earning a CAA and meeting graduation requirements, high school assessments are used for assessing student career and college readiness.

In recent years, high school mathematics have been assessed in Washington using end-of-course assessments (EOCs) in Algebra I and Geometry, while English Language Arts (ELA) have been assessed using a 10th grade reading and writing assessment.

Legislation adopted in 2011 directed that high school science be assessed statewide using a Biology end-of-course (EOC) assessment. Subsequently, the Legislature expressed intent to

implement a two-year transition from a Biology EOC to a more comprehensive science assessment. The SPI has limited authority with regard to developing and adopting a science assessment, as a new science EOC or comprehensive science assessment may only be developed and adopted when specifically directed by the Legislature. In accordance with legislation adopted in 2015, attaining a passing score on the Biology EOC assessment is not required for graduation for the class of 2016, but passing the assessment is a graduation requirement for subsequent classes.

In 2013 the SPI was directed to, beginning with the 2014-15 school year, implement student assessments in ELA and mathematics that were developed with a multistate consortium. (Washington is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, known as the SBAC.) Full integration of the SBAC assessments will occur for the class of 2019, as beginning with that class, the 11th grade SBAC assessments will be the exclusive high school assessments for ELA and mathematics. During the multi-year transition period, however, the SPI was directed to develop and administer a 10th grade ELA assessment and algebra and geometry-based EOCs using test items and other resources from the SBAC assessments.

Students who have taken a high school assessment at least once, but who have not earned a score sufficient for attaining a CAA, may use alternative assessment options established in statute to earn a CAA. The following is a list of the alternative assessment options:

- earning a high enough score on the SAT or ACT;
- earning a high enough score on an Advanced Placement/IB exam;
- grade comparison; and
- a collection of evidence process, 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.

Statute specifies numerous assessment-related general administration requirements for the SPI that are unrelated to high school graduation. One such requirement specifies that, effective with 2009 assessments forward, the SPI must redesign assessments in the content areas of reading, mathematics, and science in all non-high school grades for purposes of shortening test administration and reducing the number of short answer and extended response questions.

The SBE is responsible for establishing the performance scores that students must meet on state assessments to obtain a CAA. In accordance with statutory requirements, the SBE has established performance scores for the assessments used during the transition period, as well as for 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.

Washington State Seal of Biliteracy.

Established in 2014, the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy (Biliteracy Seal) recognizes public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more world languages in addition to English.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction adopts rules establishing criteria for award of the Biliteracy Seal. The criteria must require a student to demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting state high school graduation requirements in English, including through state assessments and credits, and proficiency in one or more world languages other than English.

Extended Learning Opportunities Program.

The Extended Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) provides assistance to 11th and 12th grade students who are not on track to meet local or state graduation requirements. The ELOP also provides assistance to 8th grade students who need additional assistance in order to have the opportunity for a successful entry into high school.

Provisions governing the ELOP specify that districts must make available to students in 12th grade who have failed to meet one or more local or state graduation requirements the option of continuing enrollment in the school district. This provision is subject to funding availability.

Instructional services provided through ELOP may include, but are not limited to:

- individual or small group instruction;
- instruction in ELA and/or mathematics that eligible students need to pass all or part of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (a statewide assessment discontinued in 2009);
- inclusion in remediation programs, including summer school; and
- language development instruction for English language learners;

Academic Acceleration Policy.

Each school district is encouraged to adopt an academic acceleration policy for high school students. Under an academic acceleration policy, the district automatically enrolls any student who meets the state standard on the high school statewide student assessment in the next most rigorous level of advanced courses offered by the high school. Students who successfully complete such an advanced course are then enrolled in the next most rigorous level of advanced course, with the objective that students will eventually be automatically enrolled in courses that offer the opportunity to earn dual credit for high school and college. Districts choosing to adopt an academic acceleration policy must provide a parent or guardian with an opportunity to opt out of the policy and enroll a student in an alternative course.

The subject matter of the advanced courses in which the student is automatically enrolled depends on the content area or areas of the statewide student assessment where the student has met the state standard. Students who meet the state standard on both end-of-course mathematics assessments are considered to have met the state standard for high school mathematics. Students who meet the state standard in both reading and writing are eligible for enrollment in advanced courses in English, social studies, humanities, and other related subjects.

Participation in High School Completion Pilot Program.

In 2007 the Legislature established a Participation in High School Completion Pilot Program for students meeting age requirements and other criteria who had satisfied all state and local high

school graduation requirements except for earning a CAA or CIA. The purpose of the program was to provide eligible students with the opportunity to earn a diploma through classes taken at a community or technical college. Authorization to participate in the pilot program expired August 1, 2015.

Summary of Bill:

Elimination of the Certificate of Academic Achievement and Certificate of Individual Achievement.

Provisions establishing, governing, and requiring the earning of a CAA or a CIA as a requirement for graduating from a Washington public high school are repealed. Numerous provisions referencing a CAA or a CIA are modified to delete the reference.

Statewide Student Assessment System.

New statewide assessment provisions are established. Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, students in 12th grade who have not met the state standard on the ELA or mathematics statewide student assessment must take and pass a locally determined course in the content area in which the student was not successful. Taking and passing the locally determined course is a graduation requirement for these students. The course must be consistent with the student's college and career goals identified in his or her high school and beyond plan. When available, school districts should prioritize enrolling such students in high school transition courses.

A "high school transition course" is defined as an ELA, mathematics, or science course offered in high school whose successful completion will ensure the student college-level placement at a public institution of higher education. High school transition courses must satisfy core or elective credit graduation requirements established by the SBE. A student's successful completion of a high school transition course does not entitle the student to be admitted to any public institution of higher education.

After the 2015-16 school year, 10th grade ELA assessment and algebra and geometry-based EOC assessments are not administered. All of the existing alternative assessment options for earning a CAA are eliminated, and associated provisions are repealed. The SBAC assessments in ELA and mathematics will continue to be used for assessing student career and college readiness, but with the discontinuation of the CAA, the results will no longer be used for purposes of earning a CAA.

The statewide high school assessment in science continues to be the Biology EOC. The SPI authority related to science assessments is modified, and the SPI may develop or adopt EOC assessments or a comprehensive science assessment when so directed by the Legislature. A provision requiring the SPI to implement a two-year transition period after the SPI has adopted a more comprehensive science assessment is removed, as is a requirement that the SPI, after it is directed to develop or adopt a new science assessment, review objective alternative assessments and make related recommendations to the Legislature.

High School and Beyond Plans.

Each student must have a high school and beyond plan (HSBP) to guide the student's high school experience and ensure preparation for postsecondary education or training and career. The HSBP must:

- be adopted for each student before the student's enrollment in high school;
- be updated during the high school grades by reviewing transcripts, assessing progress toward identified goals, and revising as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs; and
- include a four-year plan for course-taking that will ensure fulfillment of state and local graduation requirements and align with the student's career and educational goals.

For students in grade 12 who have not met the standard on the statewide student assessment, the HSBP must include the specified information, including:

- The student's results on the state assessment;
- The student's progress toward meeting state and local graduation requirements; and
- The courses, competencies, and other steps needed to be taken by the student to meet state academic standards and be eligible for graduation.

Washington State Seal of Biliteracy.

A reference to state assessments and credits in the criteria that a student must meet as part of the requirements for earning a Washington State Seal of Biliteracy is removed.

Extended Learning Opportunities Program.

Provisions governing the instructional services that may be included in an ELOP program are modified to specify that provided services may include instruction in ELA and/or mathematics that eligible students need to meet the career and college readiness standard on the statewide high school assessment. Provisions referencing the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, a statewide assessment discontinued in 2009, are deleted.

Academic Acceleration Policy.

Academic Acceleration Policy provisions are modified by deleting a provision specifying that students who meet the state standard on both end-of-course mathematics assessments, assessments that are proposed for discontinuation, are considered to have met the state standard for high school mathematics.

Other Provisions.

Other modifications related to assessments and satisfying graduation requirements are modified or deleted. A summary of these changes is described below.

Graduation Ceremony, Certificate of Attendance.

Requirements obligating school districts that operates a high school to establish a policy and procedures that permits any student who is receiving special education or related services under an individualized education program and who will continue to receive these services between the ages of 18 and 21, to participate in the graduation ceremony and receive a certificate of attendance are repealed.

Redesign of Assessment Content for Non- High School Assessments.

A provision requiring the SPI to redesign assessments in the content areas of reading, mathematics, and science in all non-high school grades for purposes of shortening test administration and reducing the number of short answer and extended response questions is repealed.

High School Transcripts.

References to CAAs and CIAs on the standardized high school transcript developed by the SPI are deleted, but requirement that the transcript indicate whether the student has met the career and college readiness standard on statewide high school assessments is added.

Repeal of the Participation in High School Completion Pilot Program.

Provisions establishing and governing the Participation in High School Completion Pilot Program that expired on August 1, 2015 are repealed.

Reference Changes.

Statutory references to statewide assessments in the content area of reading and writing are changed to ELA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on 1/14/16.

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