

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5966

As of February 26, 2015

Title: An act relating to mathematics and science course equivalencies for high school career and technical courses.

Brief Description: Concerning mathematics and science course equivalencies for high school career and technical courses.

Sponsors: Senators Rolfes, Litzow, McAuliffe and Frockt; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/16/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 2006 the Legislature directed each school district to develop a procedure to determine which career and technical education (CTE) courses can be used as equivalencies for academic credit, and required each high school or district to adopt CTE course equivalencies for CTE courses offered at the high school level.

In 2007 the Legislature established the CTE Curriculum Advisory Committee to help districts implement CTE equivalency procedures. The Committee created an implementation guide for school districts called the Equivalency Credit Toolkit.

In 2008 the Legislature provided \$400,000 for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to support the school districts' efforts to adopt course equivalencies for CTE courses offered at the high school.

In 2009 and again in 2013, OSPI updated the Toolkit. The 2013 appendices include a list of CTE courses determined by multiple school districts as having sufficient academic competencies to warrant granting equivalency credit and recommended standards and requirements for CTE equivalencies by academic content areas.

In 2014 the Legislature directed OSPI to develop curriculum frameworks for CTE courses with content in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics considered equivalent to

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academic science or mathematics courses that meet high school graduation requirements. OSPI was directed to submit the list of equivalent CTE courses and their curriculum frameworks to the State Board of Education (SBE) for review and approval before the 2015-16 school year.

Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, school districts must provide high school students with the opportunity to access at least one CTE course that is considered equivalent to an academic mathematics or science course on the list developed by OSPI and approved by SBE; except that school districts with fewer than 2,000 students may apply to SBE for a waiver from this requirement. Also beginning in the 2015-16 school year, school districts must grant academic course equivalencies in mathematics or science for a CTE course on the list developed by OSPI and approved by SBE, but the districts are not limited to the courses on the list. If the list is revised after the 2015-16 school year, the school district must grant academic course equivalencies based on the revised list beginning with the school year immediately following the revision.

SBE adopted in rule a two-for-one policy for CTE courses beginning with students in the graduating class of 2016 and beyond. Students who take CTE-equivalent courses may satisfy two graduation requirements while earning one credit for a single course. The stated purpose is to help students meet graduation requirements and add flexibility to student schedules.

Summary of Bill: The school year when a school district must grant academic mathematics or science credit for a high school CTE course on the list of equivalent courses developed by OSPI and approved by SBE is delayed from the 2015-16 school year to the 2016-17 school year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a simple bill. As SBE and OSPI worked on this it became clear that there was not enough time for these courses to be identified and the equivalency process to be done before the school districts printed their course catalogs for the 2015-16 school year. Therefore, the date for the school districts to use these standardized equivalency credits needs to be delayed. There is great concern that students will not have equal access to standardized CTE equivalencies and this may delay the implementation of the 24 credits for graduation.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Rolfes, prime sponsor; Ben Rarick, SBE; Ken Kanikeberg, Kathleen Lopp, OSPI.