

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6552

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As of February 4, 2016

**Title:** An act relating to providing school districts with an assessment inventory tool to streamline the assessment system.

**Brief Description:** Providing school districts with an assessment inventory tool to streamline the assessment system.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe, Chase, Dammeier and Frockt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/04/16.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** In December 2015, Congress passed legislation to reauthorize and amend the Elementary Secondary Act and replace the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The legislation is known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

ESSA retains the requirement from NCLB that states must assess students in reading/English language arts and mathematics in grades three through eight and once in high school; and in science at least once at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. States may assess other subjects.

ESSA authorizes grants to states to audit state and local assessment systems. The U.S. Department of Education must develop a grant application process. A first grant allows states to develop a plan for the audits and a subsequent grant can be used to implement the plan. If a state does not apply for a grant then the grant funds will be reallocated to the other states that do apply.

Within one year after a state receives a grant the state must conduct a state assessment system audit and ensure that each school district that receives grant funds conducts a local assessment audit and submits the results of the audit to the state. The state must provide school districts with resources, such as guidelines and protocols to assist in conducting and reporting the audit results. Both the state and local assessment audits must include the schedule for the administration of assessments, the purpose for which the assessment was

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designed, the purpose for which the assessment is used, feedback on the assessment system from stakeholders, and a plan based on the information gathered to improve and streamline the state and local assessment systems.

**Summary of Bill:** A process is created for school districts to audit student assessments and report the information to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy for review and subsequent report to the education committees of the Legislature.

Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). SPI must take the following actions:

- Obtain an existing student assessment inventory tool and distribute it to each school district to be used to identify the student assessments administered within the district and determine the amount of student time that is spent taking each assessment. The tool shall be openly licensed to provide free access for school districts and allow for modifications, as needed, to address district differences.
- Take all necessary steps to access federal grant funding to audit state and local student assessment systems.

School districts. Each school district must use the student assessment inventory tool obtained by SPI and take the following actions:

- identify the student assessments administered within the district, including practice and training tests, and formative and summative assessments;
- ascertain the amount of student time that is spent taking each assessment; and
- report the information to the Washington State Institute of Public Policy (WSIPP) by September 1, 2017.

School districts may use the assessment inventory tool and the information gathered to engage educators and the broader community to understand the purpose of the assessments, find gaps and redundancies, identify lack of alignment between standards and assessments, identify low-quality assessments, illuminate the resources spent on assessment, highlight which assessments provide information that is useful to teachers and students and which assessments do not, determine whether the assessments provide the information necessary for its specific purpose, and identify any assessments that are duplicative or unnecessary.

Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). WSIPP must take the following actions:

- determine the minimum amount of assessment information necessary for essential diagnostic, instructional, and federal, state, and school district accountability purposes;
- evaluate the school district information to determine whether each assessment is providing the information necessary for its specific purposes;
- identify any assessments that are duplicative or unnecessary; and
- report to the legislative education committees of the House and Senate by September 1, 2018.

The legislation expires December 31, 2018.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 1, 2016.

**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 bill will gather the data needed to determine how much learning time is being lost due to taking assessments and which assessments are duplicative and may be eliminated. The data will help us make good decisions about our assessment system. Washington is currently transitioning to new assessments and we will get to only three state tests at the high school level for federal and state accountability and graduation. We want the most efficient and effective assessment system that we can have so it is important that policy makers see information about all of the assessments to see if there are redundancies at the district and the school level in addition to the state level.

OTHER: Teachers all over the state will tell you that they spend too much time testing and not enough time on teaching and learning. The stress of testing is creating anxiety and killing the joy of learning and teaching. We would prioritize other reforms that would reduce this testing stress such as delinking student tests from high stakes for students. However, an existing assessment inventory might be a useful tool for a pilot with incentives. The inventory should not cover all tests but only the required state and district standardized assessments, including the practice and training tests for the required assessments. Teacher driven assessments that teachers do everyday for diagnostic and instructional purposes should not be included. Information regarding the level of disruption to instruction and other costs of resources and time due to the standardized tests should be added.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor; and Senator Dammeier, sponsor.

OTHER: Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.