

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1046

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**As Passed House:**  
March 6, 2017

**Title:** An act relating to certificates of academic and individual achievement.

**Brief Description:** Concerning certificates of academic and individual achievement.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representative MacEwen).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 1/19/17, 1/26/17 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/15/17, 2/21/17 [DPS(ED)].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 3/6/17, 92-6.

### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Decouples graduation requirements from statewide high school assessments by discontinuing the Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA), the earning of which is currently required as proof that a student has successfully met standard on statewide assessments required for graduation.
- Discontinues the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) for students requiring special education who are not appropriately assessed by the state assessment system.
- Makes numerous changes related to the discontinuation of the CAA and the CIA, including eliminating alternate assessments for students who have not met standard on statewide assessments, and modifying provisions requiring the State Board of Education (SBE) to identify scores that high school students must meet in order to earn a CAA.
- Preserves provisions requiring that the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the SBE maintain and continue to develop and revise a statewide assessment system for students in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science, but removes certain provisions governing mathematics and science assessments.

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*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.*

- Modifies certain high school completion programs, including discontinuing a partially expired high school completion program for qualifying students who have met all graduation requirements except earning a CIA or CAA.
- Applies to the graduating class of 2017 and subsequent graduating classes.

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Harris, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Johnson, Kilduff, Lovick, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Slatter, Springer, Steele and Volz.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Hargrove and Stokesbary.

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill by Committee on Education be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Cody, Condotta, Fitzgibbon, Haler, Hansen, Harris, Hudgins, Jinkins, Kagi, Manweller, Nealey, Pettigrew, Pollet, Sawyer, Schmick, Senn, Springer, Stanford, Sullivan, Taylor, Tharinger, Vick and Volz.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Stokesbary, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Lytton and Wilcox.

**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 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 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) 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 recent years, high school mathematics have been assessed in Washington using end-of-course tests (EOCs) in Algebra I and Geometry, and a tenth grade reading and writing assessment has also been utilized. In 2011 legislation directed that high school science be assessed using a Biology EOC. The Legislature subsequently expressed intent to transition from a Biology EOC to a comprehensive science assessment. Assessments based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), standards which are being phased in currently, will begin in 2018.

In 2013 the SPI was directed to implement, beginning in the 2015 school year, student assessments developed with a multistate consortium in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. (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 tenth 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 eleventh 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.

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 statewide assessments. Students requiring special education who are not appropriately assessed by the state assessment system, even with accommodations, may earn a CIA through 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 mathematics to obtain a CAA and graduate from high school. Legislation adopted in 2004 required the graduating classes of 2010 onward to meet standard on a statewide high school science assessment to earn a CAA for purposes of high school graduation, but subsequent legislation has thrice delayed this requirement.

Graduation requirements obligate students in the graduating classes of 2017 and 2018 to meet the standard on: (1) the state assessments in ELA or the ELA SBAC; (2) at least one of the mathematics EOCs or the mathematics SBAC; (3) and the Biology EOC or the NGSS Assessment for the classes of 2017 and 2018, respectively. 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, and the NGSS assessment will be used to demonstrate that students meet the state standard in science.

Below is a chart illustrating the assessments required for the graduating class of 2017 and beyond.

<b>Graduating Class</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
2017 and 2018	<i>10th Grade ELA</i> <i>Or</i> 11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	<i>Algebra I EOC</i> <i>Or</i> Geometry EOC <i>Or</i> 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC (2017) with Next Generation Science Standard Assessment for 2018.
2019 Onward	11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Next Generation Science Standard Assessment

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/International Baccalaureate exam; and
- collection of evidence, scored at the state level or by regional panels of educators.

Current law also includes 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.

High School Completion Programs.

Legislation adopted in 2004 directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to develop a program plan to provide a continuing education option for students who are eligible for the state's Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) and who need more time to develop language proficiency, but who are more age-appropriately suited for a postsecondary learning environment than a high school environment. In developing the plan, the SPI was directed to consider options to formally recognize the accomplishments of students in the TBIP who have completed the twelfth grade but have not earned a CAA.

Additionally, in accordance with a pilot program adopted by the Legislature in 2007, qualifying students were eligible to enroll in a high school completion project through courses or a program of study made available by a community or technical college participating in a high school completion program. In order to qualify for participation in the pilot program, the student must have completed all state and local high school graduation requirements except for earning a CAA or CIA, and must satisfy assessment-related and other requirements. The opportunity to meet all eligibility criteria for enrollment in the program expired August 1, 2015.

## **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

### High School Graduation Requirements: Elimination of CAA, CIA, and Alternative Assessment Options.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2017, requirements for graduating from high school are decoupled from statewide high school assessments by discontinuing the CAA, the earning of which is currently required as proof that a student has successfully met standard on statewide assessments required for graduation.

The SPI and the SBE remain obligated to maintain and continue to develop and revise a statewide assessment system for students in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science, but numerous provisions related to assessments and the earning of a CAA are modified or deleted. For example:

- provisions requiring the SBE to identify assessment scores that high school students must meet in order to meet standard and obtain a CAA are discontinued;
- all alternative assessment options for earning a CAA are discontinued;
- a temporary provision governing end-of-course assessments for high school mathematics is discontinued;
- a provision governing the statewide high school assessment in science is discontinued; and
- provisions referencing CAAs (or CIAs) that govern International Baccalaureate diplomas, the Running Start Program, high school transcripts, and private schools are modified to reflect the elimination of the CAA and the CIA.

The CIA is also discontinued and no longer required for graduation for qualifying students. Students requiring special education who are not appropriately assessed by the state assessment system, even with accommodations, may, through multiple options, demonstrate skills and abilities commensurate with their individual education programs.

### High School Completion Programs.

Provisions governing the program for providing a continuing education option for older students who are eligible for the state's TBIP and who need more time to develop language proficiency, are modified. The plan for the program must consider options to formally recognize the accomplishments of students in the TBIP who have completed the twelfth grade but have not met all applicable graduation requirements.

A high school completion pilot program for qualifying students who have completed all state and local high school graduation requirements except for earning a CAA or CIA is eliminated. As noted previously, the opportunity to meet all eligibility criteria for enrollment in the program expired August 1, 2015.

### Student Learning Plans.

Current requirements for student learning plans, provisions that are eliminated in the repeal of alternative assessment provisions, are generally preserved.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education):**

(In support) The testing requirements for graduation are numerous and complicated, and the learning that occurs in the fourth academic quarter is diminished because of state-imposed testing requirements. If people trust the curriculum, the teachers, and the administrators, we should not need the present assessment requirements. The current system has diverted students away from learning, and has been more of a hindrance than a help. This bill returns control to the local level.

This bill is the best news on the testing front for students, parents, and teachers in the past 20 years: it delinks state tests from graduation requirements, but maintains all other graduation requirements. The bill promotes using the state standardized tests for their intended purpose—system accountability. The bill allows teachers to focus on teaching and learning in a non-punitive environment. It also reduces stress that impedes learning, saves money, and recognizes increased standards. There is no federal requirement to link assessments with graduation requirements. This bill will improve the quality of the education system.

A statewide system of assessments is important to support student learning. The assessment system should be robust and connected with the end goal of creating students ready for life beyond high school. This bill allows the assessment system to be more balanced and less time intensive. An ESSA work group found that the SBAC English language arts and mathematics assessments were not valid and reliable for the purposes of graduation. Very few states use these assessments for graduation purposes. The assessment system and its accountability components should be reconceptualized by a broad group of stakeholders

(Opposed) The SBE opposes this bill because it delinks assessments from graduation: the coupling should be retained. The SBE has historically supported keeping graduation requirements and assessments linked as a way to demonstrate mastery of academic content and readiness for credit-bearing courses in college. Alternative assessment options should be expanded. If enacted, the proposed new section in the bill should be named the high school and beyond plan.

(Other) The SPI suggests, given the numerous assessment bills under consideration, taking a step back and having a more formal look at the full picture of assessments, including what is required for graduation. This review should include a process for stakeholders and legislators to form a more comprehensive assessments plan.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):**

(In support) Districts support the policy of the bill as well as the costs savings resulting from delinking the three required assessments and approved alternatives from graduation requirements. Passing this bill will free up funds that typically come from local levies that are used on unnecessary and outdated graduation requirements. Regarding the Pasco School District, 213 high school seniors are scheduled to retake only the biology end of course assessment. There are 470 juniors and sophomores in the district that are also scheduled to retake only this assessment. Without this legislation and the emergency clause, the 213

students in Pasco who have met all other state and local graduation requirements may not graduate. This bill should be passed quickly.

This bill passed the Education Committee 17 to 2 and aligns with the Washington Education Association's position that the only valid use of standardized tests is for system accountability, and not as a barrier to graduation. Testing companies and hundreds of universities and colleges that no longer require standardized test scores for admission agree with this position, as grade point average is still the best predictor of post-secondary success. This bill saves millions of dollars and helps teachers and kids. The number of states using high-stakes tests is declining. Thirty percent of Washington students fail one or more of these assessments, not just the biology assessment, and they are the real victims of the current policy. The bill saves money and time for what really works: more empowering teaching and learning with authentic teacher-driven assessments. The bill should be passed quickly to relieve districts, teachers, students, and parents of the overcomplicated, punitive, expensive, and ineffective policy.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The State Board of Education (SBE) supports the decoupling of the biology end of course assessment from graduation requirements, as well as the emergency clause to make the changes effective immediately. The SBE believes the assessment system could be streamlined and improved, but that the relationship between assessments and a meaningful high school diploma should be maintained. The maintaining of this relationship should be accomplished by strengthening the alternative assessments available to students.

**Persons Testifying** (Education): (In support) Representative MacEwen, prime sponsor; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association; and Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors' Association.

(Opposed) Kaaren Heikes, State Board of Education.

(Other) Michaela Miller, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Persons Testifying** (Appropriations): (In support) Marie Sullivan, Pasco School District; and Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.

(Other) Ben Rarick, State Board of Education.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying** (Education): None.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying** (Appropriations): None.