

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5917

As Passed House - Amended:

March 2, 2018

Title: An act relating to a systemwide credit policy regarding international baccalaureate exams.

Brief Description: Requiring a systemwide credit policy regarding international baccalaureate and Cambridge international exams.

Sponsors: Senators Mullet, Palumbo, Wilson, Frockt, Rolfes and Liias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/21/18, 2/23/18 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/2/18, 87-11.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill (As Amended by House)

- Requires public higher education institutions to establish coordinated, evidence-based policies for granting undergraduate college credit to students who successfully complete International Baccalaureate and Cambridge International examinations.
- Requires the credit policies to be posted on campus websites for the 2018 fall academic term.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Orwall, Sells, Stambaugh and Tarleton.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

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 students can often earn college credit by demonstrating competency in a subject by taking an examination. Students who score well on their examinations may earn college credit or have the option to opt-out of an introductory college course. Examples of college preparatory programs with examinations that are offered to high school students include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB), and Cambridge International.

International Baccalaureate.

The IB Diploma Programme is a two-year university preparation program for students age 16 through age 19. Students in IB participate in a compulsory core that includes a Theory of Knowledge class, an extended essay, and a creativity, activity service, and take classes in six subject groups: language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, math, and the arts. The IB courses are offered at either standard level (SL) or higher level (HL). The HL courses are comprised of 240 teaching hours whereas SL courses are 150 teaching hours. Students are required to take at least three courses at higher level, but no more than four. Students must pass an examination at the end of each course. The scoring for these examinations is a range of one to seven points. Students earn an IB diploma if they meet the minimum requirements of the program, including completing the core program and earning at least 24 points across the six subject examinations with a minimum score of three in at least four subjects. However, not all students seek to earn an IB diploma. Many students take individual IB classes. There are 23 high schools in Washington that offer the IB Diploma Programme, and according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Washington State Report Card, for the 2015-16 academic year there were 8,223 students taking IB courses.

Cambridge International.

Cambridge International Advanced are programs for students age 16 through age 19. Programs are offered in 55 different subjects in either AS or A level. Cambridge International AS is typically a one-year program, while Cambridge International A level is two years. The examinations at the end of a course are graded on a scale of A* through E. According to the OSPI, in the 2015-16 academic year there were 1,070 students enrolled in Cambridge International courses.

Each institution of higher education has its own policy for how to award credit for IB and Cambridge International examinations. Some of the institutions only award college credit for higher level IB courses or Cambridge International A levels, and some provide more credits for students who earned the IB diploma.

Advanced Placement Credit Policy.

During the 2017 Legislative Session, Engrossed Senate Bill 5234 was enacted and requires the institutions of higher education to establish a coordinated, evidence-based policy for granting undergraduate college credits to students who earn minimum scores of three on AP examinations. The institutions are required to post the policy on campus websites effective for the 2017 fall academic term and conduct reviews of the policy and report noncompliance in annual reports to the Legislature beginning November 1, 2019.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The public institutions of higher education are required to establish coordinated, evidence-based policies for granting as many undergraduate college credits as possible and appropriate to students who have successfully completed IB examinations or Cambridge International courses as demonstrated by the students' examination scores or grades. The institutions are required to take into account the evidence for student success and the relevance of the IB or Cambridge International curriculum and test scores or grades when granting college credit or waiving course requirements. Examples of policies the institutions may consider are included, such as whether a four on SL or HL IB examinations and whether a grade of E on a Cambridge International examination indicates that the student has mastered college-level coursework for which undergraduate credits may be granted.

The credit policies for all IB examinations and Cambridge International examinations must be posted on campus web sites effective for the 2018 fall academic term. The institutions must conduct biennial reviews of their credit policies and report noncompliance to the Legislature by November 1, 2020.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Last year the Legislature passed a bill granting college credit for a score of three on AP examinations. The IB was accidentally left out, and this bill is fixing that. The IB and AP need to be treated equitably. To be treated equitably, if an institution is going to award credit for an AP examination, then credit needs to be awarded for an IB examination. The score needs to be equitable too. If an institution is allowing credit for a minimum score of three on AP, then credit should be awarded for a score of four on a SL IB examination as well. Some institutions do not even award credit for IB examinations. Students need to be treated fairly. The unintended consequence of the AP bill passing last year is that now students will chose a school that offers AP over one that offers IB.

(Opposed) The IB is a high-quality program and the institutions are lucky to have these students on campus. However, this continues to set up the expectation that these students are best served with blanket credit policies. The first half of session stakeholders worked on a coordinated approach that was reasonable. That approach is the best approach. This legislation is restrictive, and hopefully there is still a chance to work on it.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Mullet, prime sponsor; Ken Jolling, Capital High School; and Marie Sullivan, Washington State Parent Teacher Association.

(Opposed) Cody Eccles, Council of Presidents; and Arlen Harris, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.