

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6144

As of January 14, 2018

Title: An act relating to reducing state assessment requirements to only those required for federal purposes in order to facilitate removal of inequitable barriers to students.

Brief Description: Reducing state assessment requirements to only those required for federal purposes in order to facilitate removal of inequitable barriers to students.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Nelson, Lias, Keiser, Hunt, Saldaña and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/15/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Maintains the requirement for school districts to administer the state assessments in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science as required by the federal law.
- Eliminates the requirement for high school students to meet the state proficiency standard on the high school assessment to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) and graduate from high school.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Federal High School Assessment Requirements. Under federal law, states must assess student achievement in ELA and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school. States must also assess student achievement in science at least once in the elementary, middle, and high school grades.

Washington State High School Assessment Requirements. Since 2008, Washington state high school graduation requirements include that most students must meet the state proficiency standard on the state assessments for ELA and mathematics to earn a CAA.

Meeting the state proficiency standard on the state science assessment was scheduled to become a CAA and graduation requirement for the graduating Class of 2015; however, the

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Legislature acted in 2015 and 2017 to delay the requirement. Current law requires the graduating Class of 2021 to meet the state proficiency standard on the state science assessment.

Alternative State Assessments. The Ninth Circuit federal court found that when a state requires students to meet the state standard on a state assessment as a high school graduation requirement then the state must provide alternative ways for students to demonstrate they have met the state proficiency standard if the student fails to meet the state standard on the state assessment.

In Washington, high school students must take the state assessment at least once before accessing an alternative. The alternatives must be comparable in rigor to the state assessments. School districts must provide the following legislatively-approved alternative assessments for a student to earn a CAA if the student did not meet the state standard on the state assessments:

- SAT/ACT/AP/IB exams — students may use their ELA and mathematics scores on the SAT; their ELA, mathematics, and science scores on the ACT; scores on specified AP exams; and scores on International Baccalaureate (IB) exams;
- Grade Point Average (GPA) comparison — the grades of a student in their 12th-grade year who has an overall GPA of 3.2 but did not meet the state standard on the state assessment are compared with the grades of students who took the same courses and met the state standard on the state assessment;
- completion of a dual credit course in ELA or mathematics in which the student earns college credit; or
- successful passage of a school district administered assessment approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Legislature passed this alternative in the 2017 legislative session and the OSPI is currently developing a process by which school districts may submit assessments for OSPI to review and approve for use as alternative assessments for graduation.

Dual Credit Programs. The Dual Credit programs allow students to take college-level courses while still in high school, including Running Start and College in the High School. Students may become eligible for the college credit based on scores obtained in the year-end examinations or through successful completion of college-level classes either in their high school or at colleges and universities.

Appeals. In the 2017 legislative session, the Legislature created an expedited appeals process for the high school students graduating Classes of 2014 through 2018 who have not met the state standard on the ELA or mathematics assessments or both but can demonstrate the student has the skills and knowledge to meet the high school graduation standards. To be eligible to appeal the student must have met all other state and local graduation requirements. Additionally, the graduating Class of 2018, must have also attempted at least one of the approved alternative assessments before accessing the expedited appeals process. Pathways for demonstrating the necessary skills and knowledge may include, but are not limited to:

- successful completion of a college level class in the relevant subject area;
- admission to a higher education institution or career preparation program;
- an award of a scholarship for higher education; or
- enlistment in a branch of the military.

Summary of Bill: School districts must continue to administer the the state assessments in ELA, mathematics, and science as required by the federal law.

The requirement that high school students must meet the state proficiency standard on the high school assessment to earn a CAA and graduate from high school is eliminated. All references to the CAA and alternative assessments are removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 9, 2018.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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