

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1089

As Passed House:
March 4, 2019

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

Brief Description: Concerning certificates of academic and individual achievement.

Sponsors: Representatives MacEwen, Volz and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/12/19, 2/21/19 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/4/19, 84-13.

Brief Summary of 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 alternative assessments for students who have not met standard on statewide assessments.
- Preserves provisions requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education 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 removes provisions governing high school science assessments.
- Applies to the graduating class of 2015 and subsequent graduating classes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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.

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Steele, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Callan, Harris, Kilduff, Kraft, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Stonier, Valdez and Ybarra.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Corry and Thai.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

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.

Additionally, 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 through 8 and in one high school grade. The ESSA also requires states to assess students in science at least once in each of three grade spans: grades 3 through 5; grades 6 through 9; and grades 10 through 12.

The SBE is responsible for establishing the performance scores that students must meet on state assessments. 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 public high school. To obtain a CAA, a student must meet state standard on required statewide assessments administered in grade 10. 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.

Students in the graduating class of 2019 and in subsequent classes must meet the state standard on the English Language Arts (ELA) SBAC and mathematics assessments. (Washington is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, known as the SBAC, a multistate consortium that developed student assessment in ELA and mathematics.) Beginning with the graduating class of 2021, graduating students must also meet the science standard on the Next Generation Science Standards assessment.

Objective Alternative Assessment Options.

Objective alternative assessment options (alternative assessments) may be utilized by students who have taken an assessment at least once. The alternative assessments, which may only be approved by the Legislature, must be comparable in rigor to the skills and

knowledge that the student must demonstrate on statewide student assessments and must be objective in their determination of student achievement of state standards. If a student meets the state standard on the alternative assessment, he or she must earn a CAA. The alternative assessments include:

- grade comparison, provided the student has a qualifying grade point average;
- earning a high enough score on the SAT or ACT;
- earning a high enough score on an Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate exam;
- earning college credit by completing a dual credit course in ELA or mathematics; and
- taking and passing a locally determined course and associated assessment.

Limited Waiver Options for Certificates of Academic and Individual Achievement.

Legislation adopted in 2017 (chapter 31, Laws of 2017 3rd sp. sess., enacted as Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2224), made numerous changes to provisions governing and affecting graduation requirements. Among other changes, the legislation established an expedited appeals process authorizing the SPI, following approval by local school districts, to waive requirements for CAAs and CIAs for qualifying students in the graduating classes of 2014 through 2018 who have not met standard on ELA assessments, mathematics assessments, or both.

In addition, districts may waive 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 grade 12 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 Bill:

High School Graduation Requirements—Decoupling from Assessments.

Beginning retroactively with the graduating class of 2015, 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 CIA is also discontinued and is no longer a graduation requirement for qualifying students. Students requiring special education who are not appropriately assessed by the state assessment system, even with accommodations, may, through alternate assessments, demonstrate skills and abilities commensurate with their individualized education programs.

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:

- 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
- references to CAAs (or CIAs) in provisions 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.

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 to eliminate references to obtaining a CAA or CIA.

A substantively expired 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.

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: Requested on February 6, 2019.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Policymakers have seen this bill before: it delinks the statewide tests from graduation requirements. The statewide tests were never designed for determining graduation eligibility. Policymakers should trust the teachers to deliver the curriculum and provide the instruction. The delinking of tests and graduation requirements should be supported this year.

Support exists for fully decoupling assessments from graduation requirements, and mandating robust high school and beyond plans (HSPBs) that connect with postsecondary pathways. There is urgency for the class of 2019 and the decoupling provisions must apply to them.

Statewide tests were not intended to determine whether the student can graduate—this is not reasonable or fair. Statewide tests are designed to assess student knowledge and to improve teaching. Bright students are not graduating because they cannot pass an SBAC assessment, and test scores are a barrier to a college education. Delinking assessments from graduation requirements will help redirect resources to support all students.

The bill should be supported, provided assessments continue to be used within the Washington improvement index. This bill is an equity issue—delinking is a more equitable approach to high school graduation requirements.

No single test should hold a student back and deny that student a diploma. The tests do not limit federal accountability provisions and they preserve the 24-credit requirements.

School principals are divided on the topic of assessments and high school graduation requirements, as they see student and system stress, but also successes in aligning standards and improving learning. The bill provides meaning and relevancy to HSBPs and student learning plans, but the system needs additional staffing and counselors to make it work.

The state standardized tests have a disproportionate impact on certain students, regardless of academic capabilities. Many states have repealed or delayed exit tests for a diploma.

The SBAC tests are flawed, and students can miss questions because the questions are unclear, not because they do not understand the subject matter. The statewide assessments measure two things: do students know enough to get out of high school; and do students know enough to go to college. These are very different issues. The state should not allow one test score to prevent a person from graduating.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative MacEwen, prime sponsor; Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors' Association; Alicia Chua; Jade McQuire; Rhonda Litzenberger, Eatonville School Board; Harium Martin-Morris, State Board of Education; Marie Sullivan, Washington State PTA; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals; and Simone Boe and Andrea Hicklin Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.