

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1424

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to increasing access to state career and technical course equivalencies.

Brief Description: Concerning access to state career and technical course equivalencies.

Sponsors: Representatives Steele, Paul, Eslick, Lekanoff, Tarleton, Frame, Jinkins, Tharinger, Ormsby, Riccelli and Stonier; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/14/19, 2/19/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires, with limited exceptions and until September 1, 2021, that school district boards of directors provide high school students with the opportunity to access at least one statewide equivalency career and technical education (CTE) course from a list of courses approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) as meeting academic graduation requirements.
- Requires, until September 1, 2021, that school district boards of directors grant academic course equivalency for at least one statewide equivalency course approved by the OSPI as meeting academic graduation requirements.
- Establishes that, beginning September 1, 2021, any statewide equivalency course offered by a school district or accessed at a skill center must be offered for academic credit, but includes waiver provisions for qualifying small districts.
- Authorizes high schools and school district boards of directors to adopt local course equivalencies for CTE courses that are not on the list of courses approved by the OSPI.

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: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Steele, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Callan, Corry, Harris, Kilduff, Kraft, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Stonier, Thai, Valdez and Ybarra.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Career and Technical Education.

Career and technical education, or CTE, is a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begins with an exploration of career options and supports basic academic and life skills. As articulated in statute, CTE enables the achievement of high academic standards, leadership, options for high-skill, high-wage employment preparation, and advanced and continuing education.

Career and technical education instruction is provided in two general course classifications—exploratory and preparatory—both of which must comply with numerous standards established by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Career and technical education instruction is delivered through programs at middle and high schools, through approved online courses, and at skill centers, the regional CTE instructional venues established and operated by a host school district.

School districts must provide high school students with the opportunity to access at least one CTE course that is considered equivalent to a mathematics course or at least one CTE course that is considered equivalent to a science course as determined by the OSPI. Until January 1, 2019, the board of directors of a school district with fewer than 2,000 students may apply to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) for a waiver from this requirement, but the State Board of Education (SBE) is authorized to adopt rules establishing the criteria to evaluate the need for a waiver.

Beginning with the class of 2019, students must each earn one CTE credit as a graduation prerequisite, but the SBE will allow students to meet this requirement through an occupational education course that meets the definition of a CTE exploratory course.

Career and Technical Education Credits—Equivalencies.

Credits awarded through a CTE course apply to core academic and graduation requirements if equivalency requirements are met. High schools or school districts must have course equivalencies for CTE courses offered to students in high schools and skill centers. As part of this requirement, each school district board of directors must develop a course equivalency approval procedure, and an equivalency may be for whole or partial credit. Career and technical education courses determined to be equivalent to core academic courses, in full or in part, by the school or district must be accepted as meeting core academic requirements, including graduation requirements, if the courses are recorded on the student's transcript using the equivalent academic high school department designation and title.

The OSPI is required to support school district efforts to adopt course equivalencies by, in part, recommending CTE curriculum that is suitable for equivalencies, publicizing best practices of districts in developing and adopting equivalencies, and providing related technical assistance and guidance to school districts.

The OSPI, in consultation with technical work groups convened for this purpose, is also required to develop and approve curriculum frameworks for a selected list of CTE courses with academic content that is considered equivalent in full, or part, to academic courses meeting graduation requirements. The content of the courses on the list must be aligned with the state's learning standards as well as industry standards. At the local level, school districts must grant academic course equivalency in mathematics or science for a high school CTE course from the list approved by the OSPI, but districts are not limited to granting equivalencies only for courses on the list.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Until September 1, 2021, school district boards of directors must provide high school students with the opportunity to access at least one CTE course that is considered a statewide equivalency course, rather than equivalent to a mathematics or science course, as determined by the OSPI. Exemptions to this course access requirement may be granted by the SPI to school districts with fewer than 2,000 students. The authority to adopt administrative rules establishing criteria for evaluating the need for a waiver is transferred from the SBE to the OSPI.

Until September 1, 2021, a school district board of directors must grant academic course equivalency for at least one statewide equivalency high school CTE course from the list of courses approved by the OSPI. Additionally, high schools and school district boards of directors are authorized to adopt local course equivalencies for CTE courses that are not on the list of courses approved by the OSPI.

Beginning September 1, 2021, any statewide equivalency course offered by a school district or accessed at a skill center must be offered for academic credit. Exemptions to this course offering requirement may be granted by the SPI, in accordance with criteria adopted by the SPI in administrative rules, to school districts with fewer than 2,000 students.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill makes the following changes to the original bill:

- specifies that on and after September 1, 2021, any statewide equivalency course offered by a school district or accessed at a skill center must be offered for academic credit (rather than any course determined by the OSPI to be a state equivalent course must be offered for academic credit); and
- makes technical changes to create uniformity in references to "statewide equivalency course."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date of Substitute 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) The core of this bill is about creating access and equity for CTE courses. Policymakers know that CTE works. This bill creates flexibility with the Core Plus CTE framework and graduation requirements.

Core Plus is a robust, manufacturing-based curriculum that is used in many high schools and skill centers in the state. The curriculum was approved to be equivalent to English, mathematics, and science courses. School districts make choices about adopting the curriculum. Some districts accept the Core Plus credits as electives while others, for the same course, give students credit toward graduation requirements. This bill will create more consistency, and a clarifying amendment is being developed.

This bill will create additional flexibility that will allow students to access and participate in CTE courses. These are good programs and access to them needs to be expanded; the CTE equivalency provisions in the bill will help to do so.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The CTE course equivalencies are an important part of a flexible, meaningful, and achievable diploma. The expansion of CTE equivalencies should be supported. The bill should be amended to remove section 2, the section related to rulemaking. The transfer of authority in that section is inconsistent with an agreement between the OSPI and the SBE in jointly developed legislation that was adopted last year.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Steele, prime sponsor; Becky Wallace, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Tim Knue, Washington Association for Career and Technical Education.

(Other) Randy Spaulding, State Board of Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.