

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 1599

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As of March 19, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to promoting career and college readiness through modified high school graduation requirements.

**Brief Description:** Promoting career and college readiness through modified high school graduation requirements.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Stonier, Harris, Dolan, Ortiz-Self, MacEwen, Kilduff, Young, Valdez, Wylie, Volz, Bergquist, Stanford, Tharinger, Lekanoff, Pollet, Slatter and Ormsby).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/08/19, 91-4.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/20/19.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes requirement that students receive a certificate of academic achievement to graduate, beginning with the class of 2020.
- Modifies provisions relating to high school and beyond plans.
- Removes testing requirements for high school graduation.
- Replaces certain graduation requirements with pathway framework.
- Extends, through the class of 2019, an expedited appeal process for waiving assessment requirements.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to contract with a vendor to implement a statewide online platform for high school and beyond plans.
- Requires the State Board of Education to convene a work group on mastery-based learning.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

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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.*

**Background: Graduation Requirements.** The State Board of Education (SBE) is required under state law to establish high school graduation requirements. Beginning with the class of 2019, graduation requirements will include a 24-credit framework. Of the 24 credits, 17 of the credits are mandatory core credits. Of the remaining seven flexible credits, two may be waived for students with unusual circumstances, as defined by local policies.

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 English languages arts (ELA) and mathematics to earn a certificate of academic achievement (CAA).

Certificates of individual achievement (CIA) are required for students who are not appropriately assessed by the assessment system, and may be earned using multiple ways to demonstrate skills and abilities commensurate with students' individual education programs.

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, in 2015 and 2017 the Legislature delayed 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 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 locally determined course or locally administered assessment approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Essential Academic Learning Requirements. Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), according to state law, are the identified knowledge and skills in which all public school students need to be proficient. These standards are based upon the student learning goals of basic education, as defined by the Legislature. OSPI is required to periodically revise EALRs to match guidelines under state law and to identify grade level content

expectations for state assessments and state and federal accountability purposes. Before developing or revising EALRs, OSPI is required to notify the SBE and provide reasoning for doing so.

High School and Beyond Plan. As established by ESHB 2224 in 2014, all high school students must have a high school and beyond plan (HSBP). Each HSBP must be initiated in seventh- or eighth-grade with a career interest and skills inventory. The plan must be updated to reflect high school assessment results, and must identify available interventions and academic support for students who have not met the high school graduation standard.

All plans must include, among other items, an identification of career and educational goals, identification of dual credit opportunities, and a four-year plan for course taking. Decisions on whether a student has met HSBP requirements are made at the local level.

**Summary of Bill:** Graduation Requirements. A CAA is a requirement for graduation through the class of 2019. Provisions relating to CAAs that do not apply to the class of 2019 are removed. The requirement that qualifying students earn a CIA as a graduation requirement is discontinued after the graduating class of 2021.

State Assessments. Beginning with the class of 2020, high school students are no longer required to meet state proficiency standards in order to graduate from high school. School districts must continue to administer state assessments in ELA, mathematics, and science for the purposes of state and federal accountability and to assess student career and college readiness.

The expedited appeals process for graduation requirement waivers is extended through the class of 2019. For all graduation classes, a school district may authorize a waiver of up to two credits based on student circumstances, so long as none of the credits are identified as mandatory core credits by the SBE.

Application of Pre-High School Credit to High School Requirements. Opt-in provisions for earning pre-high school credit are changed to opt-out provisions. Unless requested otherwise by the student and the student's family, a student who completed high school courses before attending high school must be given high school credit that applies to high school graduation requirements.

Pathways to Graduation. Beginning with the class of 2020 and in addition to local graduation requirements and those set by the SBE, students must complete a HSBP, earn required credits towards graduation, and successfully complete one or more pathways in order to earn a high school diploma. These pathways include:

- meet or exceed the graduation standard established by the SBE on the statewide high school assessments in ELA and mathematics;
- complete and qualify for college credit in dual credit courses in ELA and mathematics;
- earn high school credit in a high school transition course that meets specific requirements in ELA and mathematics;
- earn high school credit, with a C+ grade or equivalent, in specified AP, IB, or Cambridge international courses in ELA and mathematics;

- meet or exceed the scores established by the SBE for the mathematics portion and the reading, English, or writing portion of the SAT or ACT;
- meet any combination of at least one ELA option and at least one mathematics option established in the previous bullets;
- meet standards in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery; and
- complete a sequence of career and technical education courses, including those leading to workforce entry, state or nationally approved apprenticeships, or postsecondary education, that meet specific statutory criteria.

School districts are encouraged to make all graduation pathway options available to their students, and to expand their list of options until all are offered, but districts are granted discretion in determining which options they offer to students. In addition, the SBE is directed to adopt rules to implement the graduation pathway options.

High School and Beyond Plans. HSBPs must inform course taking that is aligned with the student's goals after high school and must inform junior year course taking. Plans are required to identify course sequences that include dual credit courses aligned with the student's goals, and as well as evidence the student has received information on federal and state financial aid options for postsecondary programs. For students with an IEP, the HSBP must be developed in alignment with the IEP and must be updated in alignment with their postschool transition plan.

Online Platform for High School and Beyond Plans. OSPI, subject to specific legislative funding, is directed to select and contract with a vendor to develop and implement a statewide online electronic platform for the HSBPs of students. Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, the platform must be available to all students who are required to have an HSBP. The platform must meet specified minimum requirements, and OSPI is authorized to adopt and revise rules related to the development and administration of the platform.

Modifications to Statewide High School Science Assessment. Requirements for the statewide high school assessment in science are modified to remove an end-of-course biology assessment, and to specify that the assessment must be a comprehensive assessment that measures the state standards for the application of science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts in the domains of physical sciences, life sciences, Earth and space sciences, and engineering design.

Mastery-Based Learning Work Group. By June 1, 2019, the SBE must convene a work group to inform the Governor, Legislature, and the public about barriers to mastery-based learning in Washington whereby:

- students advance upon demonstrated mastery of content;
- competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students;
- assessments are meaningful and a positive learning experience for students;
- students receive rapid, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs; and
- learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge along with the development of important skills and dispositions.

The work group must examine opportunities to increase student access to relevant and robust mastery-based academic pathways aligned to personal career goals and postsecondary education. The work group must also review the role of the HSBP in supporting mastery-based learning, and must consider:

- improvements in the HSBP as an essential tool for mastery-based learning;
- development of mastery-based pathways to the earning of a high school diploma; and
- the expansion of mastery-based credits to meet graduation requirements.

The work group must include four legislators and representatives from specified agencies and organizations, as selected by those agencies and organizations. The SBE must coordinate work group membership to ensure member diversity, including racial, ethnic, gender, geographic, community-size, and expertise diversity.

The SBE must submit an interim report outlining preliminary findings and potential recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2019, with a final report due by December 1, 2020.

Essential Academic Learning Requirements. Replaces the term "essential academic learning requirements" with "state learning standards" in state law.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 18, 2019.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** Yes.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.