

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5014

As of February 12, 2019

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 McCoy, Hasegawa, Wilson, C., Hunt and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/25/19, 2/22/19 [DPF].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the requirement that high schools students meet the state proficiency standard on high school assessments to graduate from high school.
- Removes the requirement that students receive a certificate of academic achievement or certificate of individual achievement to graduate.
- Reduces state assessment requirements to only those required for purposes of state and federal accountability.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: 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).

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.

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.

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, 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 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 must 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, the superintendent is required to notify the State Board of Education and provide reasoning for doing so.

Summary of Bill: Certificates of Achievement. CAAs and CIAs are no longer required to graduate from high school. All references in state law to the CAA and alternative assessments are removed.

State Assessments. 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.

Essential Academic Learning Requirements. Students do not have to demonstrate master of EALRs for graduation purposes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2019.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Testing requirements disproportionately affect students of color and students with difficulties; current requirements hurt certain segments of the student population. Tests should not be a determining factor in what makes a good student. Students have been accepted into college, but are not able to attend due to current requirements. The federal standard is meant to measure the system as a whole, not the individual student. Current requirements narrow the curriculum and do not address student passions. Many students retake tests multiple times.

OTHER: There is tremendous stress and workload in assessing, but much work has been put in to align these assessments with rigorous standards.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator John McCoy, Prime Sponsor; Ronda Litzenberger, Eatonville School District, Board Director, WSSDA Legislative Committee member; Alicia Chua, Senior, Eatonville School District; Shayla Coleman, Senior, Eatonville School District; Jade McGuire, Senior, Eatonville School District; Patty Wood, State Board of Education; Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors Association; Amy Shaffer, North Thurston School District; Simone Boe, Washington Education Association; Andrea Hicklin, Washington Education Association; Amy Shaffer, Washington Education Association; Rita Peterson, Washington Education Association; Tyson Johnston, Quinault Indian Nation; Michelle Nims, Washington State PTA.

OTHER: Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.