

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5548

As of February 12, 2019

Title: An act relating to providing multiple pathways to a meaningful high school diploma.

Brief Description: Providing multiple pathways to a meaningful high school diploma.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman and Hunt; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/25/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes requirement that students receive a certificate of academic achievement to graduate.
- Modifies provisions relating to high school and beyond plans.
- Removes testing requirements for high school graduation.
- Replaces current graduation requirements with pathway framework.
- Extends through the class of 2019, an expedited appeal process for waiving assessment requirements.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: High School and Beyond Plan. In 2014 the Legislature passed ESHB 2224 requiring all high school students to 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 course plan. Decisions on whether a student has met HSBP requirements are made at the local level.

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.

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 (IEP).

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.

Summary of Bill: Graduation Requirements. A CAA or CIA is a requirement for graduation through the class of 2019. Provisions relating to CAAs and CIAs that do not apply to the class of 2019 are removed.

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.

In addition, the expedited appeals process for graduation requirement waivers exists through the class of 2019. For all graduation classes, a school district may authorize a waiver of up to two credits, so long as none of the credits are identified as mandatory core credits by the SBE.

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 that the student has received information on federal and state financial aid options for postsecondary programs.

For student's with an IEP, the HSBP must be developed in alignment with the IEP and must be updated in alignment with their postschool transition plan.

Pathways to Graduation. Beginning with the class of 2020, the pathway to graduation and a meaningful high school diploma must include the completion of a HSBP, earning credits

towards graduation, and successfully completing one or more pathways. These pathways include:

- earning high school credit in a high school transition course, an ELA or mathematics dual credit course, a CTE sequence of courses or program or study, or through an apprenticeship preparation program;
- being accepted into a registered apprenticeship program;
- meeting or exceeding scores in high school assessments, SAT/ACT, or certain dual credit exams;
- passing the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery; or
- passing an industry-based exam.

For the classes of 2020 and 2021, students may demonstrate career and college readiness through acceptance into an institution of higher education or through employment in an occupation identified in the student's HSBP.

Statewide Science Assessment. Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, the statewide science assessment shall 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. Provisions are eliminated relating to science assessment standards and biology.

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: Delinking assessments is important, but should also include necessary steps that are focused on postsecondary outcomes. Postsecondary transition plan offers more pathways for students with disabilities. School directors for years have been against linking assessments with graduation but support a rigorous diploma. The bills offer flexibility that honors the diversity of students. Expedited appeal process is necessary for students in the Class of 2019.

CON: Barriers to graduation should be reduced, not increased. Not all districts are able to provide all the pathways, thereby creating more barriers to graduation.

OTHER: Changes can be made to the bill to provide greater clarity. High School and Beyond Plan enhancements and credit waivers are needed, but other requirements are not as focused on career and college readiness. Current system is working and graduation requirements are increasing, but current list of pathways have issues. Bill does not adequately all students or outcomes.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Amy Brackenbury, Washington School Counselors Association; Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors Association; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals; Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

CON: Simone Boe, Washington Education Association.

OTHER: Patty Wood, State Board of Education; Carey Morris, League of Education Voters; Michelle Nims, Washington State PTA; Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable; Dave Powell, Stand for Children.

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