

**SB 5498** - H COMM AMD

By Committee on Education

ADOPTED 03/04/2022

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature affirms its statutory  
4 assertion that the purpose of a high school diploma is to declare  
5 that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education,  
6 gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills  
7 to be a lifelong learner.

8 (2) The legislature finds that, on rare occasions and due to  
9 unforeseen circumstances, school districts may wish to provide  
10 recognition of a student's status of being on-track to graduate,  
11 which is interrupted by an untimely passing that prevents the  
12 completion of the secondary education program. In these limited  
13 instances, school districts should have discretion to issue a  
14 posthumous high school diploma with an "honoris causa" inscription.

15 (3) The legislature recognizes that the authority to issue a  
16 high school diploma properly rests with the local school district  
17 and its determination of whether a student has met the applicable  
18 state and local graduation requirements. The legislature finds,  
19 however, that establishing uniform requirements governing the  
20 issuance of posthumous diplomas by school districts will promote the  
21 proper and effective administration of the public education system.

22 (4) The legislature, therefore, intends to authorize school  
23 districts to issue posthumous high school diplomas for qualifying  
24 students and in accordance with delineated requirements that promote  
25 local discretion, consistent administration, and the acknowledgement  
26 of academic achievements that were prematurely interrupted by the  
27 student's untimely passing.

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**Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.230.120 and 2008 c 185 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) School districts shall issue diplomas to students signifying graduation from high school upon the students' satisfactory completion of all local and state graduation requirements. Districts shall grant students the option of receiving a final transcript in addition to the regular diploma.

(2) School districts or schools of attendance shall establish policies and procedures to notify senior students of the transcript option and shall direct students to indicate their decisions in a timely manner. School districts shall make appropriate provisions to assure that students who choose to receive a copy of their final transcript shall receive such transcript after graduation.

(3)(a) A school district may issue a high school diploma to a person who:

(i) Is an honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the United States; and

(ii) Left high school before graduation to serve in World War II, the Korean conflict, or the Vietnam era as defined in RCW 41.04.005.

(b) A school district may issue a diploma to or on behalf of a person otherwise eligible under (a) of this subsection notwithstanding the fact that the person holds a high school equivalency certification or is deceased.

(c) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt a form for a diploma application to be used by a veteran or a person acting on behalf of a deceased veteran under this subsection (3). The superintendent of public instruction shall specify what constitutes acceptable evidence of eligibility for a diploma.

(4)(a) A school district, at the request of the parent, guardian, or custodian, may issue a posthumous high school diploma for a deceased student if the student:

1 (i) Was enrolled in a public school of the district at the time  
2 of death;

3 (ii) Was deemed on-track for graduation before the time of  
4 death; and

5 (iii) Died after matriculating into high school.

6 (b) A high school diploma issued under this subsection (4) must  
7 bear the inscription "honoris causa" and may not be issued before  
8 the graduation date of the class in which the student was enrolled.

9 (c) Nothing in this subsection (4):

10 (i) Obligates school districts to award a diploma for a deceased  
11 student at the same ceremony or event as other graduating students; or

12 (ii) Limits the retroactive issuance of a high school diploma.

13 (d) Diplomas issued under this subsection (4) may not be applied  
14 toward student graduation counts or for any other purpose of federal  
15 and state accountability data collection.

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17 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. This act may be known and cited as  
18 Evitan's law."

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20 Correct the title.

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EFFECT: (1) Authorizes, rather than requires, school districts to issue posthumous high school diplomas for qualifying students.

(2) Changes criteria for the issuance of a posthumous diploma by: (a) removing provisions requiring the student to have completed at least 75% of the total number of credits required and instead requiring the student to have been deemed on-track for graduation; and (b) removing provisions requiring the student to have completed grade 11 or the equivalent and instead requiring the student to have matriculated into high school before death.

(3) Requires posthumous diplomas to be inscribed with "honoris causa."

(4) Adds intent language.

(5) Makes non-substantive structural and grammar changes.

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