

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1162

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Education

**Title:** An act relating to creating new graduation credit and pathway options.

**Brief Description:** Concerning high school graduation credit and pathway options.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Stonier, Harris, Lekanoff, Hackney, Pollet, Dolan and Callan; by request of State Board of Education).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 1/22/21, 2/4/21 [DPS], 1/11/22, 1/21/22 [DP2S].

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill**

- Establishes an additional graduation pathway option that enables students to meet graduation pathway requirements by completing a performance exhibition meeting specified criteria.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Bergquist, Callan, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Steele and Stonier.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative McEntire.

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

**Background:**

Students earning a high school diploma must satisfy course and credit requirements established by the State Board of Education (SBE), meet any locally established requirements, complete a high school and beyond plan, and meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway option.

Graduation pathway requirements were established through legislation enacted in 2019 and began application with the graduating class of 2020. The graduation pathway options, which are implemented through rules adopted by the SBE, are as follows:

- meet or exceed the graduation standard established by the SBE on the statewide high school assessments in English language arts (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 an appropriate grade or exam score in specified Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, 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 standard in the armed services vocational aptitude battery; and
- complete a sequence of career and technical education (CTE) courses that are relevant to the student's postsecondary pathway and that meet specific 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 pathway options they offer.

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**Summary of Bill (Second Substitute):**

An additional graduation pathway option is established. School districts may offer students the opportunity to meet graduation pathway requirements by completing a performance exhibition that includes: authentic evidence demonstrating industry or profession-specific knowledge and skills in two or more subject areas; and opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in other state learning standards.

Students who select the performance exhibition pathway option must have successfully completed, or demonstrated mastery or competency in, Algebra 1 or Integrated Math 1, and

Geometry or Integrated Math 2, or have earned two credits in equivalent CTE courses. The term "demonstrated mastery or competency in" is defined to mean having earned mastery or competency-based credit in accordance with the policies of the applicable school or district.

Prior to offering the performance exhibition pathway option to students, the board of directors of the school district must adopt a written policy in conformity with applicable state requirements that describes the school district's processes for approving student requests to use the pathway, and evaluating student performance exhibitions.

The SBE, prior to adopting rules to implement the performance exhibition pathway, must consult with states, schools in Washington and in other states, or both, that have successfully implemented exhibition or performance-based options that students may use to demonstrate knowledge and skills. The consultations, among other topics determined by the SBE, must address:

- criteria that is or may be employed when constituting panels to evaluate student performance exhibitions; and
- needed or anticipated considerations for the promotion and support of mastery-based learning practices.

School districts are directed to determine if there is disproportionality among specific student subgroups participating in and completing each graduation pathway option offered by the school district. If disproportionality is found, school districts must take appropriate corrective actions to ensure the pathway options are equitable.

### **Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:**

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

- removes provisions allowing students in the graduating class of 2021 and subsequent classes to qualify for graduation with 20 credits (instead of 24 credits), including the completion of all mandatory core subject credits and the personalized pathway requirements established by the SBE;
- removes provisions specifying that the limitations on the ability of a school district to grant individual student waivers of up to two credits based on the student's circumstances does not apply in circumstances where a district is granted flexibility from state graduation requirements under Engrossed House Bill 1121, legislation enacted in 2021 that authorized waivers for graduation requirements during times of emergencies;
- specifies that students who select the performance exhibition graduation pathway option must have successfully completed, or demonstrated mastery or competency in, Algebra 1 or Integrated Math 1, and Geometry or Integrated Math 2, or have earned two credits in equivalent CTE courses;
- defines "demonstrated mastery or competency in" as used in the performance exhibition graduation pathway requirements to mean having earned mastery or competency-based credit in accordance with the policies of the applicable school or

- district; and
- expands the consultation duties that the SBE must meet before it adopts rules to implement a performance exhibition graduation pathway by requiring that the consultations address needed or anticipated considerations for the promotion and support of mastery-based learning practices.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Second Substitute Bill:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The intention is for the bill, through new language, to be narrowed to only pathway provisions, with the credit-related provisions removed. The new graduation pathway option will be permissive, not mandated, and it will aim to provide flexibility for demonstrating student proficiency. System inequities exist in all pathways, but the new pathway will allow a greater level of engagement and will be more relevant for students' futures. The previous pathways were for larger groups of students. The new pathway will promote engagement and can also be used for high-achieving students. This pathway will also work to integrate mastery-based learning into graduation requirements.

Expanding graduation pathways choices for students will give them additional options and allow greater connections with workforce skills. There is also potential for CTE provisions in the pathway. Students and parents should be made aware of all pathway options.

There is strong support for the addition of a rigorous performance exhibition pathway. Doing so will extend the opportunities for students to pursue their education in ways that are relevant to them and potential employers. The bill reflects the innovation and opportunity that our students deserve.

The current pathways do not provide meaningful options for all students, for example, there is no pathway for arts and music. This bill will allow students to show what they know and can do through a performance exhibition. Students will need more time and educator support for the performance exhibition pathway option.

The Legislature tasked the SBE with analyzing pathways. The research shows that the existing pathways are inadequate, and this bill creates policies that address the SBE's research. A performance exhibition pathway will align with mastery-based learning and student interests.

Students are supportive of mastery-based learning concepts, including learning and applying hands-on skills. Students should have a pathway that is valuable to them and that aligns with their passions and skills. A performance exhibition pathway will be challenging, but it's the kind of challenge students want.

Flexibility considerations should be factored into the development of a performance exhibition pathway. Students really need the options that this pathway will provide.

(Opposed) The 24-credit graduation requirement should not be changed. The current performance exhibition language doesn't adequately require that students demonstrate academic proficiency. Students must demonstrate that they have met math and ELA requirements in alignment with state learning standards, and they may combine pathways, if necessary.

Flexibility in portfolio and other pathway options are not always good for black students and will not help them prepare for postsecondary experiences. Accountability is critical and appropriate accountability measures should be included in the bill.

The accountability provisions should be strengthened to ensure that students are not pointed in a direction that limits their career and income options and that promotes disproportionality. Math and ELA requirements should be included in the performance exhibition pathway option.

Stakeholders want to ensure that students graduate with basic skills beyond those that are necessary for minimum wage employment options. The performance exhibition pathway does not measure ELA or math, but does allow consideration of non-core credits—this is inconsistent with other pathways. Students should have pathway options, but the bill should focus on promoting ELA and math skills and should include appropriate accountability measures.

(Other) Many students have struggled with the existing pathway options. Some schools are not big enough to offer a CTE pathway. By providing an additional pathway option, students who are interested in career options will have another choice for demonstrating their skills. This is more equitable. The credit bar keeps changing, so the 24-credit requirement should be retained.

Principals support adding an additional graduation pathway to the current choices. Students want a thorough experience with a menu of options. Schools have adjusted to the 24-credit requirements and changing this will undo progress. The current graduation credit requirement should be retained.

There are concerns about the proposed performance exhibition pathway—the existing pathway options are correct. Students are finding less relevance in their studies, but the method of responding to this should be through the credit structure, not through the creation

of a new pathway. The system will point students to the performance exhibition at the last minute. There are also concerns about reducing graduation credit requirements.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Monica Jurado Stonier, prime sponsor; Josie Cummings, Building Industry Association of Washington; Cindy McMullen, Washington State School Directors Association, and Central Valley School District; Nasue Nishida, Washington Education Association; Linda Drake and Bill Kallappa, State Board of Education; Nisqually Tribe; Pavan Venkatakrisnan, State Board of Education, and Association of Washington Student Leaders; and Carolyn Logue, Stride-K12.

(Opposed) Virginia Barry, Stand for Children; Steve Smith, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; Shirline Wilson, Education Reform Now Advocacy; and Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable.

(Other) Derek Forbes; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals; and Jenny Plaja, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.