

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5249

As Passed House:

April 7, 2021

Title: An act relating to supporting mastery-based learning.

Brief Description: Supporting mastery-based learning.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Nobles, Das, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nguyen, Saldaña and Wilson, C.; by request of State Board of Education).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/12/21, 3/23/21 [DP];

Appropriations: 4/1/21 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/7/21, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Makes various changes to a temporary mastery-based learning work group (work group), including extending its duration, assigning new duties and report requirements, and expanding its membership.
- Directs the State Board of Education (SBE) to review a Washington profile of a graduate developed by the work group and to submit a report of related findings and recommendations to the Governor and the education committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2022.
- Modifies graduation pathway survey duties of the SBE by requiring the SBE to seek input from high school students and recent graduates, and submit a second graduation pathways report to the education committees of the Legislature by December 10, 2022.

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.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Bergquist, Callan, McCaslin, McEntire, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Steele and Stonier.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 32 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke, Caldier, Chandler, Chopp, Cody, Dolan, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Frame, Hansen, Harris, Hoff, Jacobsen, Johnson, J., Lekanoff, Pollet, Rude, Ryu, Schmick, Senn, Springer, Steele, Stonier, Sullivan and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Jordan Clarke (786-7123).

Background:

Mastery-Based Learning Work Group.

Legislation enacted in 2019 directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to convene and staff a 13-member temporary work group (work group) to inform the Governor, the Legislature, and the public about barriers to mastery-based learning in Washington. As described in the legislation, mastery-based learning, in part, allows students to advance upon demonstrated mastery of content, and includes competencies with explicit, measurable, and transferable learning objectives.

The work group was directed to 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 was also directed to review the role of the high school and beyond plan (HSBP) in supporting mastery-based learning.

The work group is comprised of four legislators, two students, and seven representatives that are self-selected from delineated agencies and organizations, including the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC), the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and organizations representing high school teachers, counselors, and principals.

The SBE was directed to submit two work group reports to the Governor and the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate: a preliminary report by December 1, 2019; and a final report detailing all findings and recommendations related to the work group's purpose and tasks by December 1, 2020.

All provisions establishing the work group and directing its actions expire March 1, 2021.

Graduation Requirements and Pathways.

To qualify for graduation from a public high school in Washington, general education students must satisfy course and credit requirements established by the SBE, meet any locally established requirements, complete an HSBP, 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 eight graduation pathway options are implemented through rules adopted by the SBE.

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.

Survey and Reporting Requirements Related to the Graduation Pathway Options.

The SBE was directed in 2019 to survey specified interested parties, including representatives from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, associations representing business, and members of the EOGOAC, regarding the creation of additional graduation pathways and whether modifications should be made to the existing pathways. The SBE was directed to provide a report summarizing the information collected in the surveys to the education committees of the Legislature by August 1, 2020.

In combination with annual information reported by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the SBE, beginning in January of 2021, is required to survey a sampling of school districts that are unable to provide all graduation pathway options. The purpose of the survey is to identify the types of implementation barriers of school districts. Using these survey results, and those from the surveys conducted for its August 1, 2020 report, the SBE must review the graduation pathways, the suggested changes to graduation pathways, and the options for additional graduation pathways. The results must be provided in a report to the education committees of the Legislature by December 10, 2022.

Summary of Bill:

Mastery-Based Learning Work Group.

Various changes are made to provisions governing the work group.

First, the membership of the work group is expanded from 13 to 17 members, with one new

member from each of the following:

- a Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)-approved teacher preparation program with experience in mastery-based learning as selected by a state association representing teacher preparation programs;
- the PESB;
- the Washington Student Achievement Council; and
- the online learning community as selected by the online learning advisory committee of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Second, the substantive duties of the work group are also modified. By December 10, 2021, the work group must develop a Washington state profile of a graduate (profile of a graduate or profile) describing the cross-disciplinary skills a student should have developed by the time the student graduates from high school.

In developing the profile, the work group must consult with students, families, and educators who have been underserved by the education system, examples of which include communities of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities. The work group must seek guidance from the EOGOAC regarding how to meaningfully engage with these communities. Additionally, the work group must consult with representatives from postsecondary education and training programs, labor, and industry, and seek input from the Council of Presidents and the Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Regarding reporting duties, the December 1, 2020 final report of the work group is redesignated as a second interim report. By December 10, 2021, the SBE must submit a final report to the Governor and the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate that includes the profile of a graduate and related recommendations for supporting the implementation of mastery-based learning. The SBE is also designated as a recipient of the final report on a profile of a graduate.

Lastly, provisions establishing the work group and directing its actions are extended from March 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022.

Additional Reporting Duties of the State Board of Education.

The SBE is directed to review the profile of a graduate recommended by the work group. The SBE may consider modifications to the profile based on public comments and must submit a report outlining its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate by December 31, 2022.

The report may include recommendations to align graduation requirements established in statute with the profile of a graduate. Any recommended additional graduation pathway options or changes to graduation pathway options may only be established by statute. If the SBE elects to develop alignment recommendations, it must consider:

- whether changes to the core subject area requirements, flexible credits, and noncredit

- requirements should be made and what those changes should be;
- the relationship between credits and core subject area requirements; and
- how certain components of the high school diploma work together as a system of graduation requirements designed to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and civic engagement, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner.

Survey and Reporting Requirements Related to the Graduation Pathway Options.

The SBE, in surveying interested parties regarding the creation of additional graduation pathways and whether modifications should be made to the existing pathways, must also survey high school students and recent high school graduates.

The SBE is also directed to provide a second report summarizing the information collected in graduation pathway surveys to the education committees of the Legislature by December 10, 2022.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except section 1, relating to a temporary mastery-based learning work group, which contains an emergency clause and takes effect March 1, 2021.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education):

(In support) The 2019 establishment of the work group is part of the transformation of our education system from a manufacturing economy to a digital economy. Under mastery-based learning, students advance by mastery of content. This type of learning is more important than ever. Legislation adopted in 2019 that established the graduation pathways was a major change and this bill is a next step. This bill charges the SBE with aligning the profile of a graduate with graduation requirements and expands the work group.

Mastery-based learning is the future. Students and employers are calling for authentic assessments, and mastery-based learning gives students purpose and agency in their academic efforts and post high school plans. Mastery-based learning will close achievement gaps and make education more relevant for all students.

The work group's efforts will transform all Washington students, including those who are farthest from educational justice. The remote learning required by the pandemic has been difficult for many students. Policymakers and educators need to provide better options for students. Students must not be treated with a one-size-fits-all approach, and mastery-based learning will be beneficial to students. The efforts of the work group should be continued.

Mastery-based learning provides more personalization and differentiation to students. The bill should be amended to include representatives from the Special Education Advisory Council or higher education representatives with universal design for learning experience. Special education students and English language learners should be added as categories for tracking student participation in graduation pathways.

Some school districts are using mastery-based learning within their education programs. This legislation will cause additional information to be researched and reported. The profile of a graduate will describe cross disciplinary skills. The SBE will need to review the profile and the bill specifies that changes to graduation requirements cannot be made without legislation.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Education): Senator Wellman, prime sponsor; Ashley Lin, Mastery-based Learning Workgroup; Krestin Bahr, Eatonville School District and Washington Association of School Administrators; Sarah Butcher, Roots of Inclusion, SEL for Washington; and Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Testifying (Appropriations): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Education): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations): None.