

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5249

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As of January 25, 2021

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

**Brief Description:** Supporting mastery-based learning.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wellman, Nobles, Das, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nguyen, Saldaña and Wilson, C.; by request of State Board of Education.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/25/21.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Mastery-Based Learning Work Group to develop a Washington State profile of a high school graduate, in consultation with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee and others.
- Places a representative from an approved teacher preparation program with experience in mastery-based learning on the work group.
- Directs the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop rules relating to the profile of a graduate.
- Requires the SBE to perform a survey on graduation pathways that includes high school students and recent graduates.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

**Background:** Mastery-Based Learning Work Group. Legislation passed in 2019—E2SHB 1599—directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to convene and staff a mastery-based

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learning work group to inform the Governor, Legislature, and public about barriers to mastery-based learning. Mastery-based learning is a program model whereby:

- students advance upon demonstrated mastery of content;
- competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students;
- assessments are meaningful and a positive learning experience for students;
- students receive rapid, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs; and
- learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge and the development of important skills and dispositions.

The work group is 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 must consider:

- improvements in the High School and Beyond Plan as an essential tool for mastery-based learning;
- development of mastery-based pathways to earning a high school diploma;
- the results of competency-based pathways previously approved by the SBE; and
- the expansion of mastery-based credits to meet graduation requirements.

The work group submitted an interim report to the Governor and Legislature in December 2019 and a final report in December 2020. The work group is currently set to expire March 1st.

Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. In 2009, the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) was created to synthesize the findings and recommendations from achievement gap studies and recommend policies and strategies to close the achievement gap.

High School Graduation Requirements. Washington state students must meet various requirements in order to graduate high school and receive a diploma. Currently, students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas as determined by the SBE. Students must also complete a High School and Beyond Plan and satisfy any local requirements.

In addition, students must meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway in order to receive their high school diploma. These include:

- meeting or exceeding a set standard on statewide English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments;
- completing and qualifying for college credit in dual credit courses in ELA and mathematics;
- earning high school credit in a high school transition course in ELA and mathematics;
- earning high school credit with a C+ grade or receiving particular scores in AP, international baccalaureate, or Cambridge international courses;
- meeting or exceeding set scores on the SAT or ACT;

- meeting standard in the ASVAB; or
- completing a sequence of career and technical courses.

Beginning August 1, 2019, the SBE was required to conduct a survey of interested parties regarding what additional graduation pathways should be added to existing pathways and whether other modifications should be made. Interested parties included, among others, representatives from various agencies and associations representing institutions of higher education, educators, school administrators, and members of the EOGOAC.

**Summary of Bill:** Mastery-Based Learning Work Group. Profile of a Graduate. By December 10, 2021, the Mastery-Based Learning Work Group shall develop a Washington State profile of a graduate describing the skills that a student should have developed by the time they graduate high school.

In developing the profile, the work group shall consult with students, families, and educators who have been underserved by the education system. The work group shall seek guidance from the EOGOAC regarding how to engage with these communities. In addition, the work group must consult with representatives from postsecondary education and training programs, labor, and industry.

The work group must submit a final report on a profile of a graduate and related recommendations for supporting implementation of mastery-based learning by December 10, 2021.

*Membership.* The work groups membership must include one representative from an approved teacher preparation program with experience in mastery-based learning as selected by a state association representing teacher preparation programs.

State Board of Education. Rule Adoption. The SBE shall consider for adoption the profile of a graduate recommended by the Mastery-Based Learning Work Group. The SBE may consider modifications and must adopt the recommended or modified profile by April 30, 2022.

The SBE shall propose rules by December 31, 2022 to align graduation requirements to support implementation of the adopted profile of a graduate, and in doing so must consider:

- changes to the core subject area requirements, flexible credits, and noncredit requirements;
- the relationship between credits and core subject area requirements; and
- how 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.

*Graduation Pathways.* In addition to existing parties, the SBE must also survey high school

students and recent high school graduates regarding adding graduation pathways or modifying current ones. The SBE must provide an additional report to the education committees of the Legislature by December 10, 2022.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** Yes.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Children learn in different modalities; mastery-based learning helps provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century. The bill takes the mastery-based learning work a step further. Mastery-based education provides a more meaningful way of assessing students' abilities in a way that encourages ownership over school work. The prevailing one-size-meets-all style of education does not meet all student needs, while mastery-based learning allows for better preparation for postsecondary goals. Strong state-level support is needed for mastery-based learning to be successful. Having a profile of a graduate will set out the skills and abilities high school students should possess. The legislation includes highlighting student voices and will help students receive a more personalized education that will help them succeed. Mastery-based learning allows student to catch up with work and get ahead. The work from this bill will provide greater equity by assisting the education of students of color. The bill is an incremental approach to improving mastery-based learning in the state.

CON: The bill is a complete re-write of graduation requirements through rulemaking. Changes to graduation requirements, including changes to pathway requirements, should be made deliberately with maximum input. Mastery-based education is already occurring in CTE, which already provides a framework without having to modify graduation requirements. The bill takes away the Legislature's ability to have direct input in graduation requirements. The language in the bill could better define what specifically community consultation entails.

OTHER: Changes in graduation requirements should incorporate input from higher education to ensure that students are set up for success at that level. The legislation should make it clear which groups are involved in the appointing of members.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Laurie Weidner, PESB; Ashley Lin, Student, Evergreen School District; Paul Pitre, State Board of Education; Krestin Bahr, Washington Association of School Administrators, Eatonville School District; Alissa Muller, State Board of Education; Austina De Bonte, Coalition for Gifted Education; Carolyn Logue, Stride, Inc.—formerly K12, Inc; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Kimberly Headrick, Medical Lake School District.

CON: Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable; Dave Mastin, Association of Washington Business; Virginia Barry, Stand for Children.

OTHER: Ruben Flores, Council of Presidents; Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

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