

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1308

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to high school graduation pathway options.

Brief Description: Concerning high school graduation pathway options.

Sponsors: Representatives Stonier, Dye, Ortiz-Self, Tharinger, Riccelli, Reed and Pollet; by request of State Board of Education.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/6/23, 2/13/23 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes an additional graduation pathway option that enables students to meet pathway requirements by completing a performance-based learning experience.
- Establishes requirements for the performance-based learning experience pathway and prescribes duties that the State Board of Education (SBE) and school districts must meet before the pathway can be offered to students.
- Directs the SBE to review and monitor the implementation of graduation pathway options to ensure school district compliance with requirements.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Callan, Harris, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, Stonier and Timmons.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Rude, Ranking

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.

Minority Member; Eslick and Steele.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives McClintock and Sandlin.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Graduation Requirements. To qualify for a high school diploma, public school students must satisfy credit and subject area requirements established by the Legislature and the State Board of Education (SBE), fulfill any locally established requirements, complete a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP), and meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway option.

Graduation Pathways. Legislation adopted in 2019 (Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1599, enacted as Chapter 252, Laws of 2019) established graduation pathway requirements that began application with the graduating class of 2020. The stated intent of the pathway options was to provide students with multiple pathways to graduating with a meaningful high school diploma that are tailored to the students' goals.

The graduation pathway options, which are implemented through rules adopted by the SBE, give students the option to meet pathway requirements by:

1. meeting or exceeding the graduation standard established by the SBE on the statewide high school assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics;
2. completing and qualifying for college credit in dual-credit courses in ELA and mathematics;
3. earning high school credit in a high school transition course that meets specific requirements in ELA and mathematics;
4. earning high school credit with an appropriate grade or exam score in specified Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Cambridge International courses in ELA and mathematics;
5. meeting or exceeding the scores established by the SBE for the mathematics portion and the reading, English, or writing portion of the SAT or ACT;
6. meeting any combination of at least one ELA option and at least one mathematics option established in the previous bullets;
7. meeting standard in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery; or
8. completing a sequence of career and technical education 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.

The 2019 legislation also established reporting requirements related to the graduation pathways, including annual data collection and reporting duties for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and directing the SBE to conduct a survey about the creation of additional graduation pathways and whether modifications should be made to existing pathways.

Using the annually collected data and the survey information, the SBE was directed to review the graduation pathways, the suggested changes to those graduation pathways, and the options for additional graduation pathways, and to provide a report to the education committees of the Legislature in December 2022. The Legislature is in receipt of the report.

Summary of Bill:

Establishment of New Graduation Pathway. An additional graduation pathway option is established. School districts may offer students the opportunity to meet graduation pathway requirements by completing a performance-based learning experience through which the student applies knowledge and skills in a real-world context, providing evidence of applying state learning standards in at least two of the core subject areas identified by the SBE that are most directly aligned with the student's education or career goals as stated in their HSBP.

The performance-based learning experience may take a variety of forms, such as a project, practicum, work-related experience, community service, or cultural activity, and may result in a variety of products that can be evaluated, examples of which include a performance, presentation, portfolio, report, film, or exhibit.

The performance-based learning experience must conform to state requirements established in rule by the SBE that address the safety and quality of the performance-based learning experience, and the authentic performance-based assessment criteria for determining that the student has applied the applicable learning standards. The rules may allow external parties, including community leaders and professionals, to participate in the evaluation of the student's performance, and must require that the evaluation include at least one certificated teacher with an endorsement in each relevant subject area or with other applicable qualifications.

Prior to offering the performance-based learning experience pathway option to students, the school district board of directors must adopt a written policy in conformity with applicable state requirements.

Provision of Information to Students and Families. School districts must annually provide students in grades 8 through 12 and their parents or legal guardians with comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options offered by the school district. School districts must provide this information in a manner that conforms with the district's

language access policy and procedures, and are encouraged to begin providing this information to students when they are in sixth grade.

Review and Monitoring Requirements. The SBE must review and monitor the implementation of the graduation pathway options to ensure school district compliance with graduation pathway requirements and school district data and analysis obligations. The reviews and monitoring may be conducted concurrently with other oversight and monitoring conducted by the SBE. The review and monitoring information must be collected annually and reported to the education committees of the Legislature every two years, beginning January 10, 2025.

At least annually, school districts must examine data on student groups participating in and completing each graduation pathway option offered by the district. The applicable student data must be disaggregated by a minimum number of student groups, including race and ethnicity subgroups, and by:

1. gender;
2. students who are the subject of a dependency proceeding;
3. students who are experiencing homelessness; and
4. multilingual/English learners.

If the results of the analysis show disproportionate participation and completion rates by student groups, the school district must identify reasons for the observed disproportionality and implement strategies as appropriate to ensure the graduation pathway options are equitably available to all students.

Provisions directing the SBE to perform completed survey and reporting duties related to graduation pathway options are repealed.

Other Graduation Pathway Modifications. The SBE is directed to establish the list of AP, IB, and Cambridge international courses that can be used for meeting English language arts and mathematics for the AP, IB, Cambridge International Courses graduation pathway option, rather than having qualifying courses delineated in statute.

The stated intent of the pathway options is revised to specify that the options are intended to provide a student with multiple ways, including test-based, course-based, and performance-based options, to demonstrate readiness in furtherance of the student's individual goals for high school and beyond. For purposes of this intent provision, "demonstrate readiness" means the student is able to apply state learning standards in English language arts and mathematics or two or more core subject areas that most directly align with the student's HSBP goals.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a concept that is not new to the Education Committee and previous legislation establishing an additional graduation pathway was approved by the House of Representatives. Existing graduation pathways give students multiple options for finding their way to their next steps in life. The Career and Technical Education graduation pathway has been difficult to implement, but this bill will not impact those efforts and the larger number of impacted students. This bill will help students meet graduation requirements.

The three parts of a diploma build upon each other. Pathways are intended to provide options, and relevance is the key to doing so. Three years of research by the SBE shows that existing pathways do not meet the needs of all students. A theme that emerged in the research was the need for more relevant options that can be customized with the needs and goals of students. This will be another pathway option that districts can choose to offer.

This bill creates an opportunity to connect industry to the classroom. The additional parent and student notification provisions in the bill are a positive addition.

This policy empowers students to take their next steps after graduation. The bill extends the opportunity to connect students' career and post-secondary interests with relevant rigor and academic requirements.

There are concerns about inequitable access to the existing graduation pathways. Research of the SBE shows that students want an additional option, where students can show readiness, in conformity with requirements. This bill addresses equity issues. The deletion of AP class listings, and instead assigning that listing authority to the SBE, is appreciated.

School districts are committed to providing students with options. The current pathways do not meet the needs of all students. There are concerns that 15 percent of students may not meet current pathway requirements and many students have sought waivers for graduation requirements. Current pathways are not relevant and accessible to all students. The pathway option proposed in the bill will better meet the needs of students.

Establishing an additional option that districts can offer to students is a good idea. A performance-based learning pathway will allow students to demonstrate authentic knowledge through a personalized framework. The proposed pathway may appeal to students who are considering dropping out.

Students need more options, and this bill will give students more flexibility and control over their education. The 24-credit system is not working.

School counselors were surveyed about their priorities for legislation, and graduation pathway options was identified as a top priority.

(Opposed) The purpose of the existing pathways is to demonstrate minimum requirements for ELA and math. This bill will blow up that framework and allow students to demonstrate applied knowledge outside of the core areas of ELA and math. Demonstrating knowledge in ELA and math is particularly important in post-COVID era. The bill should be amended to have the proposed pathway focused on English and math.

(Other) The proposed change to the definition of "demonstrate readiness" is duplicative of what students are already expected to do. The considerable flexibility of this bill will make district reporting and subsequent analysis difficult to do. There is a potential that some students, including English language learners, will be diverted to the proposed pathway. The reporting and other requirements of the bill should be strengthened. Some school districts might need funding to meet the data reporting and analysis requirements.

Some student groups have more difficulty accessing pathway options than others. This bill will require significant cost and time commitments by school districts. Funding should be provided for implementing and administering the requirements of the bill.

The bill lacks a key component: an assessment of the effectiveness of pathways. Graduated students should be surveyed with appropriate questions about post-graduation professional life.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Monica Jurado Stonier, prime sponsor; Randy Spaulding, Washington State Board of Education; Michelle Nims, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; John Parker, Central Valley School District; Brian Mathieson, Vancouver School District; Jim Kowalkowski, Rural Education Center; Josie Cummings, Building Industry Association of Washington; Amy Brackenbury, Washington School Counselor Association; and Nick Massie, Southwest Washington Contractors Association and Rotschy, Inc.

(Opposed) Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable.

(Other) Jen Rose, Lake Washington School District; Kim Reykdal, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Andy Cilley, Lakewood CARES; and Logan Endres, Washington State School Directors' Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.