
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6778

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Shin, Kauffman, and Kline)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/10.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing an alternative route to a high
2 school diploma; amending RCW 28A.230.120, 28A.655.061, 28A.655.0611,
3 and 28A.155.045; reenacting and amending RCW 28A.230.090; adding a new
4 section to chapter 28A.230 RCW; and creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the higher
7 education coordinating board has established minimum standards for
8 admission to a public four-year institution of higher education in
9 Washington. The legislature further finds that, with only minor
10 supplementation, all of the four-year institutions rely on these
11 standards when it comes to minimum requirements for admission.
12 Therefore, if the state's four-year colleges and universities consider
13 the standards adopted by the higher education coordinating board to be
14 sufficiently rigorous for admission, the legislature finds that
15 students who can meet and exceed these standards should qualify for a
16 high school diploma.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230
18 RCW to read as follows:

1 As an alternative to the high school graduation requirements
2 established under RCW 28A.230.090 and 28A.655.061, and any additional
3 local graduation requirements established by school districts, any
4 student who meets the following requirements shall receive a high
5 school diploma:

6 (1) Successfully completes the minimum credits for admission to a
7 public four-year institution of higher education adopted by the higher
8 education coordinating board under RCW 28B.76.290, which includes
9 meeting the required college academic distribution requirements;

10 (2) Successfully complete one occupational credit as defined in WAC
11 180-51-060;

12 (3) Earns a cumulative average grade of at least a three on a four-
13 point scale, as determined by the school district, for the courses
14 required under subsection (1) of this section; and

15 (4) Completes a culminating project and a high school and beyond
16 plan according to rules adopted by the state board of education.

17 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.230.090 and 2009 c 548 s 111 and 2009 c 223 s 2
18 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

19 (1) Except as provided in section 2 of this act, the state board of
20 education shall establish high school graduation requirements or
21 equivalencies for students, except those equivalencies established by
22 local high schools or school districts under RCW 28A.230.097. The
23 purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready
24 for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and
25 citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner.

26 (a) Any course in Washington state history and government used to
27 fulfill high school graduation requirements shall consider including
28 information on the culture, history, and government of the American
29 Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state.

30 (b) Except for students meeting the requirements of section 2 of
31 this act, the certificate of academic achievement requirements under
32 RCW 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement
33 requirements under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a
34 public high school but are not the only requirements for graduation.

35 (c) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board's
36 high school graduation requirements for a high school and beyond plan
37 shall remain at the local level.

1 (2)(a) In recognition of the statutory authority of the state board
2 of education to establish and enforce minimum high school graduation
3 requirements, the state board shall periodically reevaluate the
4 graduation requirements and shall report such findings to the
5 legislature in a timely manner as determined by the state board.

6 (b) The state board shall reevaluate the graduation requirements
7 for students enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous career and
8 technical education programs, particularly those programs that lead to
9 a certificate or credential that is state or nationally recognized.
10 The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students enrolled in
11 these programs have sufficient opportunity to earn a certificate of
12 academic achievement, complete the program and earn the program's
13 certificate or credential, and complete other state and local
14 graduation requirements.

15 (c) The state board shall forward any proposed changes to the high
16 school graduation requirements to the education committees of the
17 legislature for review and to the quality education council established
18 under RCW 28A.290.010. The legislature shall have the opportunity to
19 act during a regular legislative session before the changes are adopted
20 through administrative rule by the state board. Changes that have a
21 fiscal impact on school districts, as identified by a fiscal analysis
22 prepared by the office of the superintendent of public instruction,
23 shall take effect only if formally authorized and funded by the
24 legislature through the omnibus appropriations act or other enacted
25 legislation.

26 (3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other
27 than English established by the state board of education or a local
28 school district, or both, for purposes of high school graduation,
29 students who receive instruction in American sign language or one or
30 more American Indian languages shall be considered to have satisfied
31 the state or local school district graduation requirement for
32 instruction in one or more languages other than English.

33 (4) If requested by the student and his or her family, a student
34 who has completed high school courses before attending high school
35 shall be given high school credit which shall be applied to fulfilling
36 high school graduation requirements if:

37 (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic
38 level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth

1 grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing
2 the same course requirements and examinations as the high school
3 students enrolled in the class; or

4 (b) The academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for
5 seventh and eighth grade classes and the course would qualify for high
6 school credit, because the course is similar or equivalent to a course
7 offered at a high school in the district as determined by the school
8 district board of directors.

9 (5) Students who have taken and successfully completed high school
10 courses under the circumstances in subsection (4) of this section shall
11 not be required to take an additional competency examination or perform
12 any other additional assignment to receive credit.

13 (6) At the college or university level, five quarter or three
14 semester hours equals one high school credit.

15 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.230.120 and 2008 c 185 s 1 are each amended to
16 read as follows:

17 (1) School districts shall issue diplomas to students signifying
18 graduation from high school upon the students' satisfactory completion
19 of all local and state graduation requirements or upon completion of
20 the requirements in section 2 of this act. Districts shall grant
21 students the option of receiving a final transcript in addition to the
22 regular diploma.

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

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

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

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

35 (b) A school district may issue a diploma to or on behalf of a
36 person otherwise eligible under (a) of this subsection notwithstanding

1 the fact that the person holds a high school equivalency certification
2 or is deceased.

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

8 **Sec. 5.** RCW 28A.655.061 and 2009 c 524 s 5 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 (1) The high school assessment system shall include but need not be
11 limited to the Washington assessment of student learning, opportunities
12 for a student to retake the content areas of the assessment in which
13 the student was not successful, and if approved by the legislature
14 pursuant to subsection (10) of this section, one or more objective
15 alternative assessments for a student to demonstrate achievement of
16 state academic standards. The objective alternative assessments for
17 each content area shall be comparable in rigor to the skills and
18 knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the Washington
19 assessment of student learning for each content area.

20 (2) Subject to the conditions in this section, a certificate of
21 academic achievement shall be obtained by most students at about the
22 age of sixteen, and is evidence that the students have successfully met
23 the state standard in the content areas included in the certificate.
24 With the exception of students satisfying the provisions of RCW
25 28A.155.045 (~~(e)~~), 28A.655.0611, or section 2 of this act, acquisition
26 of the certificate is required for graduation from a public high school
27 but is not the only requirement for graduation.

28 (3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, with the exception
29 of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, a student who
30 meets the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics
31 content areas of the high school Washington assessment of student
32 learning shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. If a
33 student does not successfully meet the state standards in one or more
34 content areas required for the certificate of academic achievement,
35 then the student may retake the assessment in the content area up to
36 four times at no cost to the student. If the student successfully
37 meets the state standards on a retake of the assessment then the

1 student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. Once
2 objective alternative assessments are authorized pursuant to subsection
3 (10) of this section, a student may use the objective alternative
4 assessments to demonstrate that the student successfully meets the
5 state standards for that content area if the student has taken the
6 Washington assessment of student learning at least once. If the
7 student successfully meets the state standards on the objective
8 alternative assessments then the student shall earn a certificate of
9 academic achievement.

10 (4) Beginning no later than with the graduating class of 2013, a
11 student must meet the state standards in science in addition to the
12 other content areas required under subsection (3) of this section on
13 the Washington assessment of student learning or the objective
14 alternative assessments in order to earn a certificate of academic
15 achievement. The state board of education may adopt a rule that
16 implements the requirements of this subsection (4) beginning with a
17 graduating class before the graduating class of 2013, if the state
18 board of education adopts the rule by September 1st of the freshman
19 school year of the graduating class to which the requirements of this
20 subsection (4) apply. The state board of education's authority under
21 this subsection (4) does not alter the requirement that any change in
22 performance standards for the tenth grade assessment must comply with
23 RCW 28A.305.130.

24 (5) The state board of education may not require the acquisition of
25 the certificate of academic achievement for students in home-based
26 instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, for students enrolled in private
27 schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or for students satisfying the
28 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045.

29 (6) A student may retain and use the highest result from each
30 successfully completed content area of the high school assessment.

31 (7) School districts must make available to students the following
32 options:

33 (a) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
34 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the
35 state standards if the student is enrolled in a public school; or

36 (b) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
37 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the
38 state standards if the student is enrolled in a high school completion

1 program at a community or technical college. The superintendent of
2 public instruction and the state board for community and technical
3 colleges shall jointly identify means by which students in these
4 programs can be assessed.

5 (8) Students who achieve the standard in a content area of the high
6 school assessment but who wish to improve their results shall pay for
7 retaking the assessment, using a uniform cost determined by the
8 superintendent of public instruction.

9 (9) Opportunities to retake the assessment at least twice a year
10 shall be available to each school district.

11 (10)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction
12 shall develop options for implementing objective alternative
13 assessments, which may include an appeals process for students' scores,
14 for students to demonstrate achievement of the state academic
15 standards. The objective alternative assessments shall be comparable
16 in rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate
17 on the Washington assessment of student learning and be objective in
18 its determination of student achievement of the state standards.
19 Before any objective alternative assessments in addition to those
20 authorized in RCW 28A.655.065 or (b) of this subsection are used by a
21 student to demonstrate that the student has met the state standards in
22 a content area required to obtain a certificate, the legislature shall
23 formally approve the use of any objective alternative assessments
24 through the omnibus appropriations act or by statute or concurrent
25 resolution.

26 (b)(i) A student's score on the mathematics, reading or English, or
27 writing portion of the SAT or the ACT may be used as an objective
28 alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating that a
29 student has met or exceeded the state standards for the certificate of
30 academic achievement. The state board of education shall identify the
31 scores students must achieve on the relevant portion of the SAT or ACT
32 to meet or exceed the state standard in the relevant content area on
33 the Washington assessment of student learning. The state board of
34 education shall identify the first scores by December 1, 2007. After
35 the first scores are established, the state board may increase but not
36 decrease the scores required for students to meet or exceed the state
37 standards.

1 (ii) Until August 31, 2008, a student's score on the mathematics
2 portion of the PSAT may be used as an objective alternative assessment
3 under this section for demonstrating that a student has met or exceeded
4 the state standard for the certificate of academic achievement. The
5 state board of education shall identify the score students must achieve
6 on the mathematics portion of the PSAT to meet or exceed the state
7 standard in that content area on the Washington assessment of student
8 learning.

9 (iii) A student who scores at least a three on the grading scale of
10 one to five for selected AP examinations may use the score as an
11 objective alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating
12 that a student has met or exceeded state standards for the certificate
13 of academic achievement. A score of three on the AP examinations in
14 calculus or statistics may be used as an alternative assessment for the
15 mathematics portion of the Washington assessment of student learning.
16 A score of three on the AP examinations in English language and
17 composition may be used as an alternative assessment for the writing
18 portion of the Washington assessment of student learning. A score of
19 three on the AP examinations in English literature and composition,
20 macroeconomics, microeconomics, psychology, United States history,
21 world history, United States government and politics, or comparative
22 government and politics may be used as an alternative assessment for
23 the reading portion of the Washington assessment of student learning.

24 (11) By December 15, 2004, the house of representatives and senate
25 education committees shall obtain information and conclusions from
26 recognized, independent, national assessment experts regarding the
27 validity and reliability of the high school Washington assessment of
28 student learning for making individual student high school graduation
29 determinations.

30 (12) To help assure continued progress in academic achievement as
31 a foundation for high school graduation and to assure that students are
32 on track for high school graduation, each school district shall prepare
33 plans for and notify students and their parents or legal guardians as
34 provided in this subsection (12).

35 (a) Student learning plans are required for eighth through twelfth
36 grade students who were not successful on any or all of the content
37 areas of the Washington assessment for student learning during the
38 previous school year or who may not be on track to graduate due to

1 credit deficiencies or absences. The parent or legal guardian shall be
2 notified about the information in the student learning plan, preferably
3 through a parent conference and at least annually. To the extent
4 feasible, schools serving English language learner students and their
5 parents shall translate the plan into the primary language of the
6 family. The plan shall include the following information as
7 applicable:

8 (i) The student's results on the Washington assessment of student
9 learning;

10 (ii) If the student is in the transitional bilingual program, the
11 score on his or her Washington language proficiency test II;

12 (iii) Any credit deficiencies;

13 (iv) The student's attendance rates over the previous two years;

14 (v) The student's progress toward meeting state and local
15 graduation requirements;

16 (vi) The courses, competencies, and other steps needed to be taken
17 by the student to meet state academic standards and stay on track for
18 graduation;

19 (vii) Remediation strategies and alternative education options
20 available to students, including informing students of the option to
21 continue to receive instructional services after grade twelve or until
22 the age of twenty-one;

23 (viii) The alternative assessment options available to students
24 under this section and RCW 28A.655.065;

25 (ix) School district programs, high school courses, and career and
26 technical education options available for students to meet graduation
27 requirements; and

28 (x) Available programs offered through skill centers or community
29 and technical colleges, including the college high school diploma
30 options under RCW 28B.50.535.

31 (b) All fifth grade students who were not successful in one or more
32 of the content areas of the fourth grade Washington assessment of
33 student learning shall have a student learning plan.

34 (i) The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified,
35 preferably through a parent conference, of the student's results on the
36 Washington assessment of student learning, actions the school intends
37 to take to improve the student's skills in any content area in which

1 the student was unsuccessful, and provide strategies to help them
2 improve their student's skills.

3 (ii) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the
4 student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the
5 plan made as necessary.

6 **Sec. 6.** RCW 28A.655.0611 and 2009 c 17 s 1 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 (1) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008 and through no
9 later than the graduating class of 2012, students may graduate from
10 high school without earning a certificate of academic achievement or a
11 certificate of individual achievement if they:

12 (a) Have not successfully met the mathematics standard on the high
13 school Washington assessment of student learning, an approved objective
14 alternative assessment, or an alternate assessment developed for
15 eligible special education students;

16 (b) Have successfully met the state standard in the other content
17 areas required for a certificate under RCW 28A.655.061 or 28A.155.045;

18 (c) Have met all other state and school district graduation
19 requirements; and

20 (d)(i) For the graduating class of 2008, successfully earn one high
21 school mathematics credit or career and technical course equivalent,
22 including courses offered at skill centers, after the student's
23 eleventh grade year intended to increase the student's mathematics
24 proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the mathematics standards
25 assessed on the high school Washington assessment of student learning;
26 and

27 (ii) For the remaining graduating classes under this section,
28 successfully earn two mathematics credits or career and technical
29 course equivalent, including courses offered at skill centers, after
30 the student's tenth grade year intended to increase the student's
31 mathematics proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the mathematics
32 standards assessed on the high school Washington assessment of student
33 learning.

34 (2) The state board of education may adopt a rule that ends the
35 application of this section with a graduating class before the
36 graduating class of 2012, if the state board of education adopts the
37 rule by September 1st of the freshman school year of the graduating

1 class to which the provisions of this section no longer apply. The
2 state board of education's authority under this section does not alter
3 the requirement that any change in performance standards for the tenth
4 grade assessment must comply with RCW 28A.305.130.

5 (3) This section does not apply to students who meet the
6 requirements of section 2 of this act.

7 (4) This section expires August 31, 2013.

8 **Sec. 7.** RCW 28A.155.045 and 2007 c 354 s 3 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students served under
11 this chapter, who are not appropriately assessed by the high school
12 Washington assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061, even with
13 accommodations, may earn a certificate of individual achievement. The
14 certificate may be earned using multiple ways to demonstrate skills and
15 abilities commensurate with their individual education programs. The
16 determination of whether the high school assessment system is
17 appropriate shall be made by the student's individual education program
18 team. Except as provided in RCW 28A.655.0611 and section 2 of this
19 act, for these students, the certificate of individual achievement is
20 required for graduation from a public high school, but need not be the
21 only requirement for graduation. When measures other than the high
22 school assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used, the
23 measures shall be in agreement with the appropriate educational
24 opportunity provided for the student as required by this chapter. The
25 superintendent of public instruction shall develop the guidelines for
26 determining which students should not be required to participate in the
27 high school assessment system and which types of assessments are
28 appropriate to use.

29 When measures other than the high school assessment system as
30 defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used for high school graduation
31 purposes, the student's high school transcript shall note whether that
32 student has earned a certificate of individual achievement.

33 Nothing in this section shall be construed to deny a student the
34 right to participation in the high school assessment system as defined
35 in RCW 28A.655.061, and, upon successfully meeting the high school

1 standard, receipt of the certificate of academic achievement.

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