

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2047

As Reported by House Committee On: Appropriations

Title: An act relating to reducing the costs of the student assessment system by using consortium-developed assessments and reducing the assessments required for graduation to three content areas.

Brief Description: Reducing the costs of the student assessment system by using consortium-developed assessments and reducing the assessments required for graduation to three content areas.

Sponsors: Representatives Springer, Hunter, Sullivan and Tharinger.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 4/22/13, 4/23/13 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to adapt the statewide assessment system in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics in the 2014-15 school year using assessments developed by a multistate consortium.
- Ends the Geometry end-of-course test after the 2012-13 school year.
- Provides that, beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students must meet the state standard for graduation in ELA rather than in reading and writing.
- Directs the SPI also to adopt the consortium-developed College and Career Readiness assessments in ELA and mathematics, to be used as an alternative assessment for students who attempt the state assessment at least once, but not to be required for graduation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Ormsby, Vice Chair; Carlyle, Cody, Dunshee, Green, Haigh, Hudgins, Hunt, Jinkins, Kagi, Maxwell, Morrell, Pedersen, Pettigrew, Seaquist, Springer and Sullivan.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Wilcox, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Dahlquist, Fagan, Haler, Harris, Parker, Pike, Ross, Schmick and Taylor.

Staff: Jessica Harrell (786-7349) and Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Statewide Student Assessment System.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the State Board of Education, is authorized to maintain and revise a statewide academic assessment system to measure student knowledge and skills on state learning standards, and to use for purposes of state and federal accountability. The assessment system must cover the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science for elementary, middle, and high school years.

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires states to assess students based on state learning standards in reading and mathematics in each of grades three through eight and one high school grade, as well as in at least one grade each in elementary, middle, and high school in science.

In 2008 legislation was enacted requiring high school mathematics to be assessed using end-of-course tests (EOCs) in Algebra I and Geometry. In 2011 legislation directed that high school science be assessed using a Biology EOC.

High School Graduation.

Since the graduating class of 2008, Washington students have been required to meet the state standard on the assessment in reading and writing for high school graduation. Students in the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014 will also have to meet the standard in at least one of the mathematics EOCs. Beginning with the class of 2015, students will have to meet the standard in reading, writing, two mathematics EOCs, and the Biology EOC for high school graduation.

Students who take the state assessment at least once but are not successful may attempt to meet the state standard for graduation purposes using an alternative assessment. Alternative assessments must be expressly authorized by the Legislature.

Common Core State Standards and Assessments.

In 2011 the SPI adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as the state learning standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Washington is participating in a multistate consortium to develop new student assessments for the CCSS. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) will have assessments ready for states to use in 2014-15 for federal accountability purposes. The SBAC high school assessments in ELA and mathematics will be set at a College and Career Readiness level (CCR), to be administered in grade 11. States who are part of the SBAC will be able to use questions from the test item

bank if they choose to continue offering their own high school assessments in addition to the CCR assessment.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Statewide Student Assessment System.

The SPI is directed to modify the statewide student assessment system and implement assessments developed by a multistate consortium in ELA and mathematics in the 2014-15 school year, including a high school CCR assessment which is to be used as an alternative assessment but not required for graduation. The SPI must maximize use of the consortium assessments in adapting the state high school state assessments in ELA and mathematics used for graduation purposes.

References to reading and writing as they pertain to the assessment system are replaced with references to ELA. The Geometry EOC is not administered after the 2012-13 school year.

High School Graduation.

Students may use results from either the Algebra I EOC or the Geometry EOC, until it is no longer administered, for purposes of meeting the mathematics requirement for graduation. Thereafter, the Algebra I EOC results are used.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students must meet the state standard in ELA rather than in reading and writing. Students may use results from the reading and writing assessments administered through the 2013-14 school year to demonstrate they are meeting the ELA requirement.

Results from the CCR assessments in ELA and mathematics are authorized for use as alternative assessments for graduation.

At the beginning of each school year, districts must notify parents and guardians of enrolled students in grades 8 through 12 about each student assessment required by the state, the minimum state graduation requirements, and any additional local graduation requirements. Information to be provided about the assessments is specified, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must provide the information to school districts so that they may in turn provide it to parents.

Technical changes are made to correct references to the assessment system regarding the GET Ready for Math and Science scholarship and the Apple Award for high performing elementary schools.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

School districts must notify parents and guardians of students in grades 8 through 12 at the beginning of each school year regarding required assessments and graduation requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There has been a lot of discussion about assessments this year. The SPI supports the bill.

(In support with concerns) The scores on the 11th grade tests in 2014-15 will be used to judge schools and school districts, but students will not be required to pass the tests. This has been experienced before, where students do not have the obligation to take the test seriously, and the result is false information about how schools are doing.

(With concerns) The direction of this bill is appreciated, particularly keeping the EOCs and reducing the number of tests for graduation. The concern is that there are so many things converging at the same time, and schools and students are not able to keep up. The bill provides options for current sophomores and freshmen, but it does not allow for a good transition for the classes of 2017 and 2018. An option to consider would be a suspension of the tests. It is not known how these exams are going to play out in 2014-15, and students should not pay the price of the transition to this new system.

(Opposed) There is a long standing position by the members of the Washington Education Association that no standardized test should be used for high stakes decisions. However, this bill is moving in the right direction in reducing the number of tests required for graduation and by using the 11th grade CCR test for the purpose for which it is intended, which is to measure career and college readiness. This bill fails to address the massive reform underway in schools to implement the CCSS. Teachers are hampered by having to teach to the old standards because that is what is being tested. There should be a logical transition period with a hiatus from testing, which would also save millions of dollars. One positive addition from another bill would be the requirement for parental notification regarding assessments.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Ken Kanikeberg, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(In support with concerns) Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals.

(With concerns) Marie Sullivan, Washington State School Directors' Association.

(Opposed) Wendy Rader-Konafalski, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.