
Education Committee

HB 2540

Brief Description: Establishing career and technical course equivalencies in science and mathematics.

Sponsors: Representatives Stonier, Morrell, Magendanz, Fey, Bergquist, Haigh, Freeman and Lytton; by request of Governor Inslee.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop curriculum frameworks for a selected list of career and technical education (CTE) courses whose content is considered equivalent to science or mathematics courses that meet high school graduation requirements.
- Requires school districts to grant academic credit in science or mathematics for CTE courses on the list beginning in the 2015-16 school year.
- Requires school districts to ensure students have opportunity to access CTE courses in mathematics and science that are equivalent to academic courses, but permits districts with fewer than 2,000 students to apply for a waiver from the State Board of Education.

Hearing Date: 1/23/14

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Under current law, school districts are directed to examine their credit-granting policies and award academic credit for career and technical education (CTE) courses that they determine to be equivalent to an academic course. If a student is granted equivalency credit, the student's transcript reflects the academic course number and description.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is directed to provide professional development, technical assistance, and guidance for school districts to accomplish this equivalency crediting. The OSPI has developed a Course Equivalency Toolkit to assist districts

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in making these determinations. Although the OSPI has a list of CTE courses that school districts consider equivalent, there are no data collected about the number of such credits actually granted. All decisions about granting equivalency credit are made by local school districts.

In 2011 the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a "two-for-one" policy, effective with the graduating class of 2016, that allows a student to satisfy two graduation requirements with a single CTE equivalent course, thereby freeing up room in the student's schedule for other courses. The current requirement for the graduating class of 2016 is three mathematics credits and two science credits, one of which must be a laboratory science. The SBE has proposed requiring an additional laboratory science credit.

Summary of Bill:

The OSPI, in consultation with one or more technical working groups, is directed to develop curriculum frameworks for a selected list of CTE courses whose content in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is considered equivalent, in full or in part, to science or mathematics courses that meet high school graduation requirements. The course content must be aligned with state learning standards and industry standards. The OSPI must submit the course list and curriculum frameworks to the SBE for review, public comment, and approval before the 2015-16 school year. The list may be periodically updated thereafter.

Beginning no later than the 2015-16 school year, school districts are required to grant academic credit in science or mathematics for the CTE courses on the OSPI list, but they are not limited to the courses on the list.

School districts must ensure that high school students have an opportunity to access the CTE courses in mathematics and science for which the district grants equivalency credit. Students may access these courses at high schools, skill centers, interdistrict cooperatives, or through the Running Start program. Boards of directors of school districts with fewer than 2,000 students may apply to the State Board of Education for a waiver from this requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 2014.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 4 requiring school districts to assure students have access to CTE course equivalencies, which takes effect September 1, 2015.