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**HOUSE BILL 1121**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Dolan, Goodman, and Pollet; by request of State Board of Education

AN ACT Relating to flexibility in high school graduation requirements; amending RCW 28A.230.090, 28A.345.080, and 28A.655.065; creating new sections; providing expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.230.090 and 2018 c 229 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The state board of education shall establish high school graduation requirements or equivalencies for students, except as provided in RCW 28A.230.122 and except those equivalencies established by local high schools or school districts under RCW 28A.230.097. The purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner.

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

(b) The certificate of academic achievement requirements under RCW 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement requirements under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a public high school but are not the only requirements for graduation.

(c)(i) Each student must have a high school and beyond plan to guide the student's high school experience and prepare the student for postsecondary education or training and career.

(ii) A high school and beyond plan must be initiated for each student during the seventh or eighth grade. In preparation for initiating that plan, each student must first be administered a career interest and skills inventory.

(iii) The high school and beyond plan must be updated to reflect high school assessment results in RCW 28A.655.070(3)(b) and to review transcripts, assess progress toward identified goals, and revised as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs. The plan must identify available interventions and academic support, courses, or both, that are designed for students who have not met the high school graduation standard, to enable them to meet the standard. School districts are encouraged to involve parents and guardians in the process of developing and updating the high school and beyond plan, and the plan must be provided to the students' parents or guardians in their native language if that language is one of the two most frequently spoken non-English languages of students in the district. Nothing in this subsection (1)(c)(iii) prevents districts from providing high school and beyond plans to parents and guardians in additional languages that are not required by this subsection.

(iv) All high school and beyond plans must, at a minimum, include the following elements:

(A) Identification of career goals, aided by a skills and interest assessment;

(B) Identification of educational goals;

(C) Identification of dual credit programs and the opportunities they create for students, including but not limited to career and technical education programs, running start programs, and college in the high school programs;

(D) Information about the college bound scholarship program established in chapter 28B.118 RCW;

(E) A four-year plan for course taking that:

(I) Includes information about options for satisfying state and local graduation requirements;

(II) Satisfies state and local graduation requirements;

(III) Aligns with the student's secondary and postsecondary goals;

(IV) Identifies dual credit programs and the opportunities they create for students; and

(V) Includes information about the college bound scholarship program; and

(F) By the end of the twelfth grade, a current resume or activity log that provides a written compilation of the student's education, any work experience, and any community service and how the school district has recognized the community service pursuant to RCW 28A.320.193.

(d) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board's high school graduation requirements for a high school and beyond plan shall remain at the local level. Effective with the graduating class of 2015, the state board of education may not establish a requirement for students to complete a culminating project for graduation. A district may establish additional, local requirements for a high school and beyond plan to serve the needs and interests of its students and the purposes of this section.

(e)(i) The state board of education shall adopt rules to implement the career and college ready graduation requirements proposal adopted under board resolution on November 10, 2010, and revised on January 9, 2014, to take effect beginning with the graduating class of 2019 or as otherwise provided in this subsection (1)(e). The rules must include authorization for a school district to waive up to two credits for individual students based on ((~~unusual~~)) individual student circumstances under RCW 28A.345.080 and in accordance with written school district policies and procedures that must be adopted by each board of directors of a school district that grants diplomas. The rules must ((~~also~~)) provide that the content of the third credit of mathematics and the content of the third credit of science may be chosen by the student based on the student's interests and high school and beyond plan with agreement of the student's parent or guardian or agreement of the school counselor or principal. The state board of education may update rules under this subsection as needed.

(ii) School districts may apply to the state board of education for a waiver to implement the career and college ready graduation requirement proposal beginning with the graduating class of 2020 or 2021 instead of the graduating class of 2019. In the application, a school district must describe why the waiver is being requested, the specific impediments preventing timely implementation, and efforts that will be taken to achieve implementation with the graduating class proposed under the waiver. The state board of education shall grant a waiver under this subsection (1)(e) to an applying school district at the next subsequent meeting of the board after receiving an application.

(iii) A school district must update the high school and beyond plans for each student who has not earned a score of level 3 or level 4 on the middle school mathematics assessment identified in RCW 28A.655.070 by ninth grade, to ensure that the student takes a mathematics course in both ninth and tenth grades. This course may include career and technical education equivalencies in mathematics adopted pursuant to RCW 28A.230.097.

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

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

(c) The state board shall forward any proposed changes to the high school graduation requirements to the education committees of the legislature for review. The legislature shall have the opportunity to act during a regular legislative session before the changes are adopted through administrative rule by the state board. Changes that have a fiscal impact on school districts, as identified by a fiscal analysis prepared by the office of the superintendent of public instruction, shall take effect only if formally authorized and funded by the legislature through the omnibus appropriations act or other enacted legislation.

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

(4) ((~~If requested by the student and his or her family~~)) (a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, a student who has completed high school courses before attending high school shall be given high school credit which shall be applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements if:

((~~(a)~~)) (i) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing the same course requirements and examinations as the high school students enrolled in the class; or

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

(b) A student must decide before the end of the first term of the student's last year of high school whether to receive credit for high school courses completed in accordance with (a) of this subsection. If the student chooses to receive high school credit, the student must decide before the end of the first term of the student's last year of high school whether to have the credit as a grade or as pass or no pass.

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

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

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.345.080 and 2014 c 217 s 203 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The Washington state school directors' association shall adopt a model policy and procedure that school districts may use for granting waivers to individual students of up to two credits required for high school graduation based on ((~~unusual~~)) individual student circumstances. The purpose of the model policy and procedure is to assist school districts in providing all students the opportunity to complete graduation requirements without discrimination and without disparate impact on groups of students. The model policy must take into consideration ((~~the unique limitations of a~~)) individual student ((~~that may be associated with such~~)) circumstances ((~~as~~)) including, but not limited to, homelessness, limited English proficiency, medical conditions that impair a student's opportunity to learn, or disabilities, regardless of whether the student has an individualized education program or a plan under section 504 of the federal rehabilitation act of 1973, and other circumstances that directly compromise a student's ability to learn. The model policy must also address waivers if the student has not been provided with an opportunity to retake classes or enroll in remedial classes free of charge during the first four years of high school.

(2) The Washington state school directors' association must distribute the model policy and procedure to all school districts in the state that grant high school diplomas by June 30, ((~~2015~~)) 2020.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.655.065 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 31 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The legislature has made a commitment to rigorous academic standards for receipt of a high school diploma. The primary way that students will demonstrate that they meet the standards in reading, writing, mathematics, and science is through the statewide student assessment. Only objective assessments that are comparable in rigor to the state assessment are authorized as an alternative assessment. Before seeking an alternative assessment, the legislature expects students to make a genuine effort to meet state standards, through regular and consistent attendance at school and participation in extended learning and other assistance programs.

(2) Under RCW 28A.655.061, beginning in the 2006-07 school year, the superintendent of public instruction shall implement objective alternative assessment methods as provided in this section for students to demonstrate achievement of the state standards in content areas in which the student has not yet met the standard on the high school statewide student assessment. A student may access an alternative if the student meets applicable eligibility criteria in RCW 28A.655.061 and this section and other eligibility criteria established by the superintendent of public instruction, including but not limited to attendance criteria and participation in the remediation or supplemental instruction contained in the student learning plan developed under RCW 28A.655.061. A school district may waive attendance and/or remediation criteria for special, unavoidable circumstances.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "applicant" means a student seeking to use one of the alternative assessment methods in this section.

(4) One alternative assessment method shall be a combination of the applicant's grades in applicable courses and the applicant's highest score on the high school statewide student assessment, as provided in this subsection. A student is eligible to apply for the alternative assessment method under this subsection (4) if the student has a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.2 on a four point grading scale. The superintendent of public instruction shall determine which high school courses are applicable to the alternative assessment method and shall issue guidelines to school districts.

(a) Using guidelines prepared by the superintendent of public instruction, a school district shall identify the group of students in the same school as the applicant who took the same high school courses as the applicant in the applicable content area. From the group of students identified in this manner, the district shall select the comparison cohort that shall be those students who met or slightly exceeded the state standard on the statewide student assessment.

(b) The district shall compare the applicant's grades in high school courses in the applicable content area to the grades of students in the comparison cohort for the same high school courses. If the applicant's grades are equal to or above the mean grades of the comparison cohort, the applicant shall be deemed to have met the state standard on the alternative assessment.

(c) An applicant may not use the alternative assessment under this subsection (4) if there are fewer than six students in the comparison cohort.

(5) The superintendent of public instruction shall implement:

(a) By June 1, 2006, a process for students to appeal the score they received on the high school assessments;

(b) By January 1, 2007, guidelines and appeal processes for waiving specific requirements in RCW 28A.655.061 pertaining to the certificate of academic achievement and to the certificate of individual achievement for students who: (i) Transfer to a Washington public school in their junior or senior year with the intent of obtaining a public high school diploma, or (ii) have special, unavoidable circumstances;

(c)(i) ((~~For the graduating classes of 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018,~~)) An expedited appeal process for waiving specific requirements in RCW 28A.655.061 pertaining to the certificate of academic achievement and the certificate of individual achievement for eligible students who have not met the state standard on the English language arts statewide student assessment, the mathematics high school statewide student assessment, the science statewide student assessment, or ((~~both~~)) all three. The student or the student's parent, guardian, or principal may initiate an appeal with the district and the district has the authority to determine which appeals are submitted to the superintendent of public instruction for review and approval. The superintendent of public instruction may only approve an appeal if it has been demonstrated that the student has the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the high school graduation standard and that the student has the skills necessary to successfully achieve the college or career goals established in his or her high school and beyond plan. Pathways for demonstrating the necessary skills and knowledge may include, but are not limited to:

(A) Successful completion of a college-level class in the relevant subject area;

(B) Admission to a higher education institution or career preparation program;

(C) Award of a scholarship for higher education; or

(D) Enlistment in a branch of the military.

(ii) A student in the class of 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017 is eligible for the expedited appeal process in (c)(i) of this subsection if he or she has met all other graduation requirements established by the state and district.

(iii) A student in the class of 2018 is eligible for the expedited appeal process in (c)(i) of this subsection if he or she has met all other graduation requirements established by the state and district and has attempted at least one alternative assessment option as established in ((~~RCW 28A.655.065~~)) this section.

(6) The state board of education shall examine opportunities for additional alternative assessments, including the possible use of one or more standardized norm-referenced student achievement tests and the possible use of the reading, writing, or mathematics portions of the ACT ASSET and ACT COMPASS test instruments as objective alternative assessments for demonstrating that a student has met the state standards for the certificate of academic achievement. The state board shall submit its findings and recommendations to the education committees of the legislature by January 10, 2008.

(7) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules to implement this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The state board of education shall convene and lead a competency-based education work group by June 1, 2019. The purpose of the work group is to facilitate student access to relevant and robust pathways aligned to their personal goals for their career and further education as reflected in their high school and beyond plans. The work group shall coordinate the:

(a) Development of a competency-based pathway to the diploma; and

(b) Expansion of options for competency-based credit that meet graduation requirements.

(2) The work group may not exceed twenty-one members and must include the following members:

(a) Two students as selected by the association of Washington student leaders;

(b) Two parents as selected by the Washington state parent teacher association;

(c) One representative from the Washington state commission on African-American affairs as selected by the governor;

(d) One representative from the Washington state commission on Asian Pacific American affairs as selected by the governor;

(e) One representative from the Washington state commission on Hispanic affairs as selected by the governor;

(f) One representative from the governor's office of Indian affairs as selected by the governor;

(g) One representative from the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee as selected by the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee;

(h) One high school principal as selected by the association of Washington school principals;

(i) One high school certificated teacher as selected by the Washington education association;

(j) One high school counselor as selected by the Washington education association;

(k) One school district board member as selected by the Washington state school directors' association;

(l) One school district superintendent as selected by the Washington association of school administrators;

(m) One community or technical college instructor or administrator as selected by the Washington state board for community and technical colleges;

(n) One university faculty or administrator as selected by the Washington student achievement council;

(o) One representative from the office of the superintendent of public instruction as selected by the superintendent of public instruction;

(p) One representative from the state board of education as selected by the chair of the state board of education; and

(q) Three representatives from business or industry as selected by the workforce training and education coordinating board.

(3) The state board of education shall:

(a) Provide leadership of the work group;

(b) Coordinate work group membership to ensure member diversity, including racial, ethnic, gender, geographic, community-size, and expertise diversity;

(c) Provide staff support to the work group; and

(d) Submit an interim report outlining preliminary findings and potential recommendations to the governor and the legislature by December 1, 2019, and a final report detailing all findings and recommendations related to the work group's purpose and tasks described in subsection (1) of this section by December 1, 2020.

(4) This section expires March 1, 2021.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) By December 1, 2021, the state board of education shall report to the legislature on the data, successes, and challenges in implementing two-credit waivers under RCW 28A.230.090 and expedited appeals under RCW 28A.655.065.

(2) This section expires June 30, 2022.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 3 and 4 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect immediately.

**--- END ---**