

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2848

Title: *An act relating to the assessment of student learning.*

Brief Description: *Defining the state's science and tenth grade assessment.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Talcott, B. Thomas, Johnson, L. Thomas, Robertson, Lambert, Carrell, Bush, Backlund, Pennington, Lisk, McDonald, Zellinsky, Mielke, Radcliff, D. Schmidt, Cairnes, Sterk, D. Sommers, Sheahan, Carlson, Chandler, Smith, Boldt and Thompson.*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: *January 29, 1998.*

Bill Analysis Prepared by: *Susan Morrissey (786-7111).*

Background: *On September 30, 1997, the Washington Commission on Student Learning (CSL), State Board of Education (SBE), and Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) presented a statutorily required report on the Certificate of Mastery to the House and Senate Education Committees. Most of the recommendations in the report reflected the work of the CSL's Certificate of Mastery ad hoc Committee. The CSL and SBE added some recommendations to those of the ad hoc committee.*

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CERTIFICATE OF MASTERY AD HOC COMMITTEE

- } *A comprehensive plan for continuous professional development for all educators should be implemented.*

- } *The implementation plan for the Certificate of Mastery should include a number of components. The components cover: voluntary participation in the 10th grade assessment in 1999; a timeline for implementing the Certificate of Mastery in 1998, in order to give students adequate notice of the new graduation requirements; and a three step approach to implementation. The recommended steps are described.*

In step one, students graduating in 2006 should be the first group required to earn a Certificate of Mastery as a requirement of high school graduation.

In step two, students should be given an opportunity to earn state-level endorsements in content areas that are not included in the initial assessments. These endorsements should be posted on students' official transcripts.

In step three, the content areas that comprise the Certificate of Mastery should be reviewed on a biennial cycle. The biennial review identified in step three should examine a number of content and assessment issues. Some of those issues are described in the report.

- } Future advisory groups working on the Certificate of Mastery should build flexibility into the assessment system. The ad hoc committee recommended several areas of flexibility for students. Students should have multiple opportunities to pass the assessment. They should be permitted to retake subsections of the assessment without taking the entire test. However, once a student passes the assessment, the student should not be able to take it again. The ad hoc committee also described other areas in which flexibility should be considered.*

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON STUDENT LEARNING

The CSL added three recommendations to those of the ad hoc committee. The commission recommended that science be phased in as an additional requirement with the class of 2008. The CSL also recommended that the biennial review process consider the feasibility of including classroom based assessments as part of the Certificate of Mastery. Finally, the commission reiterated its recommendation that private and home schooled students should not be required to earn a Certificate of Mastery.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The SBE added five recommendations to those of the ad hoc committee. In one of the recommendations, the board suggested that it be given statutory responsibility for the biennial review process and for approving all aspects of the Certificate of Mastery. The SBE also recommended that more discussion and investigation occur before final decisions are made distinguishing requirements for the Certificate of Mastery and a high school diploma.

Summary of Bill:

SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS

The SPI's requirement to have science assessments available for middle and high school students is delayed from the 1998-99 school year to the 2000-01 school year. Language is removed that suggests that science assessment will be available unless the legislature takes action to delay or prevent the assessment system and essential academic learning requirements.

HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

By September 1, 2002, the SBE will determine whether the high school assessment system developed by the CSL has been implemented and whether it is reliable and valid. If the SBE determines that the assessments meet those requirements, then

- } Beginning in the 2003-04 school year, students will meet the basic academic requirement (BAR) through successful completion of the reading, writing, communication-listening, and mathematics assessments.
- } Beginning in the 2005-06 school year, students must successfully complete the science assessment as well as the assessments above to meet the BAR.

The basic academic requirement is required for high school graduation. School districts may establish additional graduation requirements as well. The requirements may include, but are not limited to community service, senior projects, student portfolios, and classroom-based assessments.

Each student's official transcript will include information on whether the student met the BAR, the highest scores attained in each subject area, and the dates on which the student took the assessments. If a student fails to meet the assessment standard in any content area, the student may retake the assessment at the expense of the school district. If a student meets all content area standards but wishes to improve a score in a particular content area, the student may retake the assessment at his or her own expense.

BAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

By September 1, 1999, SPI will convene a BAR advisory committee. The committee will consist of no more than 15 people. Some of the interests that advisory committee members will represent are described. The committee may examine a variety of issues. These issues include, but are not limited to:

- } content areas required for the BAR;
- } endorsement policies, including endorsements that may be added to the BAR;
- } the adequacy of standards required for the BAR; and
- } implementation of the BAR.

The advisory committee will conduct pilot studies to improve, and possible expand the BAR. The purposes of the pilot studies are described. Beginning no later than September 1, 2000, the BAR advisory committee will report annually to the House and Senate Education Committees. Members of the committee may receive statutorily limited per diem and mileage allowances.

OPTIONS FOR HOME SCHOOLED AND PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Home schooled students and students enrolled in private schools are not required to meet the BAR. Home schooled students and students enrolled in private schools are not required to meet the BAR as a condition of entering a public college or university.

EXISTING STATUTORY LANGUAGE REMOVED

Statutory language is removed that required a report to the Legislature on high school assessments by September 30, 1997. Language describing the certificate of mastery and educational pathways is also removed.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not requested.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*