

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2414

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding local control and flexibility in the state assessment system.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Haler, Talcott and McCune).

House Committee on Education

Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education

Background:

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, in order to receive federal funds under Title I, each state must annually submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) that details the state's system of academic standards, assessments, and accountability. By the 2005-06 school year, each state's assessment system must include yearly assessments of students in each of grades three through eight in reading and mathematics, plus at least one assessment of these subjects for high school students. By 2007-08, assessments in science must be administered in at least one elementary, middle, and high school grade.

Under state law, Washington's assessment system already includes the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in reading, writing, and mathematics at grades four, seven, and 10, as well as a science assessment in grades five, eight, and 10. Therefore, the additional testing requirement to comply with the NCLB will be reading and mathematics assessments administered in grades three, five, six, and eight.

Under DOE rules, a state's system can be based on a uniform set of statewide assessments or a combination of state and local assessments. However, if local assessments are included, the state must assure they meet the same characteristics as a state assessment, and the results can be aggregated and compared across the state. The state must also demonstrate that its overall system has a rational and coherent design.

Under Washington's NCLB plan, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has proposed and is implementing a uniform set of statewide assessments, using the WASL in reading and mathematics at each grade level required to be assessed under the NCLB.

Summary:

Before the beginning of the 2006-07 school year, the SPI must request flexibility under the NCLB to conduct a pilot project with no more than six school districts using an assessment other than the WASL in grades three, five, six, and eight in mathematics and reading. The SPI will work with local school directors, administrators, teachers, and parents in developing the request and selecting the assessment. The districts in the pilot project must be of varying

sizes and geographic locations, including urban, suburban, and rural areas. They must also enroll ethnically and economically diverse student populations.

If the request for flexibility is granted, the SPI will revise the state accountability plan to incorporate the pilot project. School districts in the pilot project will not be required to administer the WASL in reading and mathematics in grades three, five, six, and eight during the pilot. At the end of the pilot project, the SPI will evaluate whether the piloted assessment can be used on a statewide basis and forward findings and recommendations to the Legislature and the U.S. DOE.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	1
Senate	48	0

Effective: June 7, 2006