
Education Committee

HB 2973

Brief Description: Creating a career and technical high school graduation option for students meeting state standards in fundamental academic content areas.

Sponsors: Representatives Priest, Ormsby, Kenney, Kagi, Hasegawa, P. Sullivan, Moeller, Santos and Springer.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the State Board of Education to establish a career and technical graduation option where students: 1) take courses to prepare for the Certificate of Academic Achievement; 2) enroll in an approved career and technical program and attain the program's credential; and 3) may be permitted not to meet state standards in content areas not assessed on the high school assessment.

Hearing Date: 1/26/06

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

High School Graduation Requirements.

Most graduation requirements are established by the State Board of Education (SBE). The current SBE requirements are:

1. Accumulate 13.5 credits in the content areas of English, math, science, social studies, health and fitness, arts, and occupational education, plus an additional 5.5 credits of electives;
2. Complete a high school and beyond plan; and
3. Complete a culminating project.

The SBE also requires that each content area cover at least benchmark three of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs). The EALRs cover reading, writing, mathematics, science, communication, social studies, arts, and health and fitness. Local school districts can adopt additional courses or other requirements.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, most students will also be required to obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) to obtain a diploma. Students must meet the state standards in reading, writing, and mathematics on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning to earn a CAA. Science will be added in 2010.

Career and Technical Education.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) establishes standards for and reviews and approves all career and technical education (CTE) programs offered by local school districts. The standards distinguish between exploratory and preparatory courses. In preparatory courses, students are expected to demonstrate a level of competency that includes application of the EALRs to meet industry defined standards for a specific career; demonstrate leadership and employability skills; and be employment ready or prepared for postsecondary options. The occupational skills in an approved program are written based on nationally or locally recognized industry standards.

A number of CTE programs lead to a credential or certificate recognized by the appropriate industry as a benchmark level of knowledge and skills. Examples include Cisco (computer networks), Certified Nursing Assistant, or Core Carpentry from the National Center for Construction Education and Research. Certificate programs vary in length. A program of 360 hours would require a student to enroll for two periods a day or one period a day for two years. Skills centers can offer 540 hour programs because students typically enroll at a skills center for three periods a day.

Summary of Bill:

The SBE must establish a career and technical high school graduation option that:

- Requires completion of coursework to prepare students to earn a CAA;
- Requires completion of a CTE program approved by OSPI for this purpose and attainment of the credential or certificate associated with the program; and
- May contain other course requirements, but may permit students to not be required to meet state standards in content areas not tested on the WASL so that students can focus on the CAA and CTE program requirements.

The OSPI must develop a list of approved CTE programs that qualify for the graduation option. The programs must have the following characteristics:

- Lead to a certificate or credential that is nationally recognized by trades, industries or other professional associations as necessary for employment or advancement in that field;
- Require a vocationally-intensive and rigorous course of study of at least 1,080 hours; and
- Have a high potential for providing the completer with gainful employment or entry into a postsecondary workforce training program.

Information about the option is included in a booklet about enrollment options and program opportunities distributed by the OSPI.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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