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## Education Committee

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### ESSB 5328

**Brief Description:** Creating a school-grading program that relies on the accountability index.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Litzow, Hobbs, Dammeier, Hatfield, Baumgartner, Roach, Hill, Braun and Tom).

#### Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Creates a School Grading Program using letter grades A through F as a pilot program in five school districts in 2013-14, with statewide implementation beginning in 2014-15.
- Requires grades to be assigned to schools using the increase in student achievement on state assessments, reduction in student achievement gaps, graduation rates, and other specified factors and criteria.
- Requires additional weight to be given to achievement in reading and graduation rates of at-risk students.
- Requires assignment of grades to school districts.
- Provides for an independent evaluation of the pilot program with a report by December 1, 2014.
- Requires that grades be included in school and district performance reports and report cards.

**Hearing Date:** 3/15/13

**Staff:** Barbara McLain (786-7383).

#### **Background:**

As part of a state system of education accountability, the State Board of Education (SBE) has been directed to develop an Accountability Index (Index) to identify schools for recognition, continuous improvement, and state support.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

In 2009 the SBE developed an Index using five outcomes (reading, writing, math, and science assessment scores and extended graduation rates for high schools) and four indicators (achievement of non-low income students, achievement of low-income students, achievement compared to peer schools, and improvement from the previous year). The results are averaged into a single Index score. Schools are divided based on their Index score into the following five categories:

1. Exemplary;
2. Very Good;
3. Good;
4. Fair; and
5. Struggling.

Work to revise the Index is underway as a condition of Washington's provisional waiver of certain provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The SBE has approved a preliminary prototype that includes indicators for student growth and proficiency on state assessments. High school performance would be measured by on-time and extended graduation rates, college and career readiness as measured by an 11th grade assessment of the Common Core State Standards, enrollment in dual credit courses, and students receiving industry certification.

In 2010 the Legislature authorized a process for designating a school district with one or more persistently lowest-achieving schools as a Required Action District (RAD). The RADs must conduct an academic audit, submit a required action plan for improvement to the SBE for approval, and use federal funds to implement the plan. The law currently permits use only of federal funds for the RAD process, but the legislation included an intent to implement a phase II that would use state dollars.

### **Summary of Bill:**

A School Grading Program is created beginning in the 2013-14 school year. The SBE must use the Index to identify schools using the letter grades A through F as follows:

- A for schools making excellent progress;
- B for schools making above-average progress;
- C for schools making satisfactory progress;
- D for schools making less than satisfactory progress; and
- F for schools failing to make adequate progress.

The Index must measure the increase in student achievement on state assessments in reading, writing, mathematics, and science as well as the reduction in student achievement gaps. The Index may include additional student outcome measurements.

The SBE must adopt criteria for each school letter grade. Added weight must be given to student achievement in reading.

For schools serving students in any of grades 9 through 12, added weight must be given to the graduation rate of at-risk students. In addition, at least 50 percent of the grade for these schools must be determined using the Index and the remaining percentage must be based on the following (if not already included in the Index):

- the high school graduation rate and the graduation rate of at-risk students;
- post-secondary readiness of on-time graduates, based on scores on the SAT, ACT, or a post-secondary placement test; and
- as valid data becomes available, student performance and participation in AP courses, IB courses, and dual enrollment courses, and achievement of national industry certification.

To earn a grade of A, a high school must demonstrate that its at-risk students are making adequate progress. "At-risk" is defined as students who did not meet the state standard on the eighth grade reading and mathematics assessments.

Schools earning a C grade or higher must demonstrate that at least half of the students in the lowest 25th percentile on the state reading and mathematics assessments are making adequate progress; if not, the grade is decreased by one letter.

Schools with fewer than ten students in a grade level are not assigned a grade. Schools that serve students in kindergarten through third grade earn the grade assigned to the feeder school to which at least 60 percent of the students are expected to be assigned.

Each school district must also be assigned a grade, which is calculated using student performance and learning gains data from state assessments for students enrolled for a full school year in the district. The OSPI must annually report each school district's grade to the Governor and the Legislature.

For the 2013-14 school year, the OSPI must conduct the School Grading Program as a pilot program in five geographically diverse school districts, including urban, rural, large, and small districts. The OSPI must contract for an evaluation of the pilot program. The evaluation, including any recommendations for modifications to the criteria or process used to grade schools and districts, is due to the OSPI, the Governor, and the Legislature by December 1, 2014. Any recommendations must be implemented, and the School Grading Program must be implemented statewide in the 2014-15 school year.

Beginning August 1, 2014, the OSPI must revise the model school performance report to include the grades for each school district and school, and must annually post each district's and school's report card on the OSPI website, including the grade history of the district and school. School and district grades must be included in each district's annual school performance report.

School districts with at least one school designated as a grade F must be designated as a RAD and must receive state funding to support implementation of a required action plan.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 11, 2013.

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