

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 2540

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 26, 2014

**Title:** An act relating to establishing career and technical course equivalencies in science and mathematics.

**Brief Description:** Establishing career and technical course equivalencies in science and mathematics.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Stonier, Morrell, Magendanz, Fey, Bergquist, Haigh, Freeman and Lytton; by request of Governor Inslee).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/18/14, 70-28.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/26/14 [DP-WM].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Rolfes, Assistant Ranking Member; Billig, Brown, Cleveland, Fain, Hill, Mullet and Rivers.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Under current law, school districts are directed to examine their credit-granting policies and award academic credit for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that they determine to be equivalent to an academic course. If a student is granted equivalency credit, the student's transcript reflects the academic course number and description.

Also, under current law, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must provide professional development, technical assistance, and guidance for school districts to accomplish this equivalency crediting. OSPI has developed a Course Equivalency Toolkit to assist districts in making these determinations. Although OSPI has a list of CTE courses that school districts consider equivalent, there is no data collected about the number of such credits actually granted. All decisions about granting equivalency credit are made by local school districts.

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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 2011 the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a two-for-one policy, effective with the graduating class of 2016, that allows a student to satisfy two graduation requirements with a single CTE equivalent course. The current requirement for the graduating class of 2016 is three mathematics credits and two science credits, one of which must be a laboratory science. SBE has proposed requiring an additional laboratory science credit.

There are 184 school districts, out of 295, that enroll fewer than 2000 students.

**Summary of Bill:** OSPI, in consultation with one or more technical working groups, must develop curriculum frameworks for a selected list of CTE courses with content in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics that are considered equivalent, in full or in part, to science or mathematics courses that meet high school graduation requirements. The course content must be aligned with industry standards and with state learning standards which reflect the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards. OSPI must submit the course list and curriculum frameworks to SBE for review, public comment, and approval before the 2015-16 school year. The list may be periodically updated thereafter.

Beginning no later than the 2015-16 school year, school districts must grant academic credit in science or mathematics for CTE courses on the OSPI list, but they are not limited to the courses on the list.

School districts must provide high school students with the opportunity to access at least one CTE course from the OSPI list that is equivalent to mathematics or one that is equivalent to science. Students may access these courses at high schools, skill centers, interdistrict cooperatives, or through online learning or the Running Start program. School districts with fewer than 2000 students may apply to SBE for a waiver from this requirement. SBE is authorized to grant these waivers.

The bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available. New fiscal note requested on February 24, 2014.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 4, requiring school districts to provide students with an opportunity to access CTE course equivalencies, and section 5, authorizing SBE to grant waivers, which take effect September 1, 2015.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill is about the flexibility that students need to have pathways to achieve a meaningful high school diploma. It provides students options to easily access science and mathematics credits while learning job skills and college skills through a CTE equivalent class. The bill ensures that OSPI certifies rigorous CTE courses to fulfill academic requirements in math or science. This approach will reduce the needless and confusing variation which currently exists from one school district to another

within the state. We have some concerns. This bill places new requirements on districts to offer certain courses. Not all districts currently have CTE programs, and not all districts with CTE programs offer courses that would be on the math or science equivalency lists. This means that those districts would be required to offer new courses to meet this requirement. The course equivalency legislation was intended to create equity for students taking CTE courses across the state with varying access to equivalencies, not create new course requirements for districts. We would recommend using the language found in SB 6552, which still provides for a standardization of equivalency, but does not create a new requirement for districts and waiver program.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Stonier, prime sponsor; Marcie Maxwell, Governor's Office; Carolyn Logue, Meridian High School AP Government class in Bellingham, WA, Part of TVW Classroom Connect.

**Signed In, Unable to Testify & Submitted Written Testimony:** PRO: Julia Suliman, SBE; Marie Sullivan, WA State School Directors' Assn.; Steve Leahy, WA State Director, America's Edge.