

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1785

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### As Reported by House Committee On: Education

**Title:** An act relating to eliminating the certificate of academic achievement as a requirement for high school graduation.

**Brief Description:** Eliminating the certificate of academic achievement as a requirement for high school graduation.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Reykdal, Taylor, Ortiz-Self, Dunshee, Moscoso, Appleton, S. Hunt, Takko, Gregory, Fitzgibbon, Gregerson, Pollet, Stanford, Sells, Fey, Blake, Ormsby, Peterson, Tarleton, Pike, Shea, Griffey, Klippert, Tharinger, Van De Wege, Goodman, Bergquist, Farrell, Riccelli, McBride, Condotta and Young; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

#### **Brief History:**

##### **Committee Activity:**

Education: 2/3/15, 2/17/15, 2/19/15 [DP].

#### **Brief Summary of Bill**

- Eliminates the requirement that a student meet standards on assessments in order to obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement or Certificate of Individual Achievement and graduate from a public high school.
- Strikes language referring to legislative intent to transition from the biology end of course to a more comprehensive science assessment.
- Eliminates the transition period between administration of current assessments and those developed with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), and removes the requirement that the Superintendent of Public Instruction develop assessments for use during the transition period.
- Requires students in the twelfth grade who do not meet standards on assessments to take and pass a locally determined course in that content area, preferably a "high school transition course" which is defined.
- Sets forth requirements for the High School and Beyond Plan, while retaining local district discretion with respect to whether a student has met this requirement.

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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.*

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Ortiz-Self, Vice Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Caldier, Gregory, Griffey, Hayes, S. Hunt, Kilduff, Klippert, McCaslin, Orwall and Pollet.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Magendanz, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove and Lytton.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Stambaugh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan and Springer.

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195).

### **Background:**

#### Statewide Student Assessment System.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), is authorized to maintain and revise a statewide academic assessment system to measure student knowledge and skills on state learning standards and to use for purposes of state and federal accountability. The state assessment system must cover the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science for elementary, middle, and high school years. The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires states to assess students based on state learning standards in reading and mathematics in each of grades three through eight and one high school grade, as well as in at least one grade in elementary, middle, and high school in science.

Most recently, high school mathematics has been assessed using end-of-course tests (EOCs) in Algebra I and Geometry, while a tenth grade reading and writing assessment has been utilized. In 2011 legislation directed that high school science be assessed using a Biology EOC. Subsequently, the Legislature expressed intent to transition from a Biology EOC to a comprehensive science assessment.

In 2013, the SPI was directed to implement student assessments developed with a multistate consortium in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, beginning in the 2014-15 school year. (Washington is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, known as the SBAC.) The SPI was also directed to use test items from the SBAC assessments to develop a tenth grade ELA assessment and modify the Algebra I and Geometry EOCs for use through the transition period.

The SBE is responsible for establishing the performance scores that students must meet on state assessments. By the end of the 2014-15 school year, the SBE must establish performance scores for the assessments used during the transition period, as well as the SBAC assessments. In setting scores for the high school SBAC assessments, the SBE must review the experience during the transition period, examine scores used in other states for the SBAC assessments, including states that require passage of an eleventh-grade assessment for

graduation. The scores established for purposes of graduation may be different from the scores used for the purpose of determining career and college readiness.

High School Graduation.

A Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) or a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) is one of the requirements for graduation from a Washington public high school. To obtain a CAA, a student must meet state standards on required assessments. Students requiring special education who are not appropriately assessed by the state assessment system, even with accommodations, may earn a CIA via a variety of ways to demonstrate skills and abilities commensurate with their individual education programs.

Since the graduating class of 2008, Washington students have been required to meet the state standard on the assessment in reading and writing to obtain a CAA and graduate from high school. Students in the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014 have also had to meet the standard in at least one of the mathematics EOCs. Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students will have to meet the standard on the state assessment in reading, writing, at least one of the mathematics EOCs, and the Biology EOC for high school graduation. Beginning with the graduating class of 2019, the SBAC assessments in the ELA and mathematics will be used to demonstrate that students meet the state standard in those subjects.

Below is a chart illustrating the assessments required for the graduating class of 2015 and beyond:

Graduating Class	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
2015	10th Grade Reading & Writing	Algebra I EOC Or Geometry EOC	Biology EOC
2016	10th Grade Reading & Writing Or 11th Grade ELA (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium or SBAC)	Algebra I EOC Or Geometry EOC Or 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC
2017	10th Grade ELA Or 11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	Algebra I EOC Or Geometry EOC Or 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC
2018	10th Grade ELA Or 11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	Algebra I EOC Or Geometry EOC Or 11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC

2019	11th Grade ELA (SBAC)	11th Grade Mathematics (SBAC)	Biology EOC
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Alternative Assessment Options.

Alternative assessment options exist to earn a CAA for those who have taken an assessment at least once. These include:

- grade comparison;
- earning a high enough score on the SAT or ACT;
- earning a high enough score on an Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate exam; or
- collection of evidence, scored at the state level or by regional panels of educators.

There are also provisions for waiving specific requirements pertaining to the CAA and the CIA for students who transferred to a Washington public school in their junior or senior year or who have special, unavoidable circumstances.

Assessments, Transition Courses, and College Placement.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and Washington's public baccalaureate institutions have signed agreements on the use of the SBAC assessments as evidence of college readiness. College ready scores of three or four on these assessments will allow first-year college students who have been admitted to one of Washington's public colleges or universities to be placed into entry-level college mathematics and English courses without further placement testing. Students must take placement exams for higher level course placement, such as a calculus track.

In addition, transition courses are being developed and piloted in ELA and mathematics for students who score a one or a two on the assessment. These courses will develop college and career readiness. A senior in high school who scores below a college ready level on an SBAC assessment will be able to enroll in the transition course and, if he or she earns a B grade or better, be placed into an entry-level college course in that subject.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The requirement that a student meet standards and assessments to obtain a CAA or CIA and graduate from a public high school is eliminated.

Language referring to legislative intent to transition from the biology end of course EOC to a more comprehensive science assessment is also stricken.

The transition period between administration of the reading and writing assessments and the algebra and geometry EOCs and administration of the SBAC mathematics and ELA assessments is eliminated. The SPI is not required to develop assessments for administration during this period.

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, students in the twelfth grade who haven't met standard (a level one or a level two in a four-level scoring system) on the SBAC mathematics or ELA

assessments must take, and pass, a locally determined course in that content area. The course must be consistent with career and college readiness as identified in the student's High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP). When available, school districts should prioritize the enrollment of these students in "high school transition courses."

"High School Transition Course" means an English language arts, mathematics, or science course offered in high school whose successful completion by a high school student will ensure the student college-level placement at a participating public institution of higher education. High school transition courses must satisfy core or elective credit graduation requirements established by the SBE. A student's successful completion of such a transition course does not entitle the student to be admitted to any public institution of higher education.

New HSBP requirements are put in statute, however, the decision whether a student has met this graduation requirement remains at the local level. Each student must have a HSBP to guide his or her high school experience and ensure preparation for postsecondary education or training and career. The HSBP must meet the following requirements and available high school transition courses. The plan must:

- be adopted before enrollment in high school, and updated during high school by reviewing transcripts, assessing progress toward goals, and revising as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs;
- include a four-year plan for course-taking that will ensure fulfillment of state and local graduation requirements and align with the student's career and educational goals; and
- include, for students in grade 12 who have not met standard on the statewide student assessment, information regarding: the student's assessment results; any credit deficiencies; attendance rates; progress toward meeting state and local graduation requirements; courses, competencies, and other steps needed to be taken to be eligible for graduation; and, if the student is in the transitional bilingual program, the score on the Washington language proficiency assessment.

The requirement that a high school transcript indicate whether the student received a CAA or a CIA is removed, and replaced with a requirement that the transcript indicate whether the student met the career and college readiness standard, as measured by the SBAC ELA and mathematics assessments. Similarly, reference in the statutes having to do with extended learning opportunities and the provision of ELA and mathematics needed to pass all or part of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is replaced with reference to the career and college readiness standard.

References to the CAA and the CIA are stricken throughout the school code, as well as some language in statutes that still refer to the WASL. A number of statutes having to do with the CAA, the CIA, and alternatives and appeals related to the CAA and the CIA are stricken in their entirety.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill is one of three options, and it falls in the middle between House Bill 1363 which eliminates testing and House Bill 1703 that doesn't really change much about the assessment system except that it adds an alternative. This bill decouples graduation from high-stakes testing. Research shows that requiring passage of a test for purposes of graduation increases the number of dropouts among women and minorities. Graduation rates go down, while there is no change in college admissions or career readiness. It is time to decouple the testing from graduation. Tests should be taken in the 11th grade. If a student doesn't pass an 11th grade assessment, he or she should take a course in the 12th grade, preferably a transition course and thus build a purposeful senior year. Students should be in class learning, not being tested. This bill helps reallocate the resources where they are needed. At Capital High School in Olympia, there are 21 days, and 47 hours of testing. These numbers don't even include the International Baccalaureate testing or class finals. High standards deserve support, but not high-stakes testing. It is hoped that there will be an opportunity to work with parents or counselors to include exemptions to the transition courses for those students for whom those courses are not appropriate.

(Opposed) State standards should be upheld with the use of assessments. The Governor's bill, House Bill 1703, puts the focus where it should be. The State Board of Education does agree that passage of a science assessment, currently the biology EOC, should not be required to obtain a CAA and graduate. High-stakes testing is doing harm. The focus should be on 24 credits. A single test should not trump students' coursework.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Reykdal, prime sponsor; Amy Brackenbury; Brian Vance, Association of Washington Principals; and Chris Woods, Capital High School.

(Opposed) Wendy Radar-Kowfalski; and Ben Rarick.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.