

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2238

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to eliminating the communication portion of the Washington assessment of student learning.

Brief Description: Eliminating the communication portion of the WASL.

Sponsors: Representative Quall.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 4/22/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the listening Washington Assessment of Student Learning.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cox, DeBolt, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Miloscia, Pflug, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Sump and Talcott.

Staff: Denise Graham (786-7137).

Background:

As required under current law, the state has adopted essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) in communications. In addition as required by law, public school students in the fourth, seventh, and 10th grade are assessed through the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) to ascertain whether they have learned the EALRs and met the state communication standard. The communication assessment evolved into an assessment of a student's ability to listen and comprehend the information the student heard. Therefore, the communications assessment is generally called the listening WASL. Currently, students are not held accountable for the results of the

assessment. However, beginning with the graduating class of 2008, public high school students will be required to successfully pass the high school WASL in listening in order to graduate.

Students are assessed in reading, writing, mathematics, and listening. The highest scores they collectively achieve are on the listening WASL. In 2002, on average across the state, 67 percent of fourth graders, 84 percent of seventh graders, and 82 percent of 10th graders met the state standard in listening.

Testing experts have suggested that the listening assessment does not meet industry standards for validity and reliability. The length of the assessment would have to be doubled to meet those industry standards.

Summary of Bill:

School districts will no longer be required to give students a state provided assessment in communications (listening).

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested April 1, 2003.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: The Superintendent of Public Instruction does not support the bill you have before you. She does believe that the listening assessment is an assessment that is important to students. Listening is a critical communication skill and she does not want to see that assessment go away. She does understand that you are under tight fiscal times and has taken that into consideration.

Testified: Bob Butts, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.