
Education Committee

HB 2861

Brief Description: Providing for a certificate of completion for students with individualized education programs and 504 plans.

Sponsors: Representatives Talcott, Quall, McDermott and Tom.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides special education students and students with a plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1993 with two options for meeting high school assessment graduation requirements.
- Permits these students to graduate if they earn either a Certificate of Mastery or a Certificate of Completion.

Hearing Date: 1/29/04

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By law, the State Board of Education (SBE) determines the minimum state graduation requirements for students in public and approved private schools. School districts and private schools may adopt additional requirements. In addition, passage of the high school assessment of student learning (WASL) in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and health and fitness will be required for high school graduation once the board has determined that the high school assessment system is sufficiently valid and reliable. Students who pass the assessment will also earn a Certificate of Mastery.

By rule, school boards are prohibited from denying a diploma to students solely based on any limitations in the students' abilities. By rule, school boards must adopt written policies and procedures for meeting the unique needs of special education students. The procedures must permit special education students to remain in school until the student graduates or reaches 21 years of age, whichever occurs first. If a student reaches 21 during a school year, the student may remain in school until the end of the year. The procedures must also provide the students with special education programs and special accommodations. The boards must also exempt students from certain requirements that hinder the students' progress toward graduation if there is a direct relationship between the students' failures to reach the requirements and the students' limitations.

The rules cannot provide special education students with an exemption from successful completion of the high school WASL or the Certificate of Mastery.

Summary of Bill:

Special education students and students with plans under the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have two options for meeting the requirement that students successfully complete the high school assessment in order to graduate from high school. The students may successfully complete the high school assessment and earn a Certificate of Mastery. Or, the students may complete the requirements of their special education or 504 plans and earn a Certificate of Completion if those plans do not require successful completion of the high school WASL.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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