

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6475

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, January 20, 2006
Ways & Means, February 7, 2006

Title: An act relating to authorizing alternative methods of assessment and appeal processes for the certificate of academic achievement.

Brief Description: Authorizing alternative methods of assessment and appeal processes for the certificate of academic achievement.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Schmidt, Eide, Weinstein, Haugen, Berkey, Kastama, Shin, Kohl-Welles, and Rasmussen; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 1/20/06 [DPS-WM, DNP]
Ways & Means: 2/6/06, 2/7/06 [DPS(EKHE), DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6475 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair, Early Learning & K-12; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Carrell and Pflug.

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6475 as recommended by Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member and Pflug.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Brandland, Parlette and Roach.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: In 2004, the Washington State Legislature established in state law a requirement that, beginning with the Class of 2008, high school students must obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement or a Certificate of Individual Achievement to graduate. These certificates are in addition to other state and local graduation requirements.

To obtain a Certificate of Achievement, students in the Class of 2008 and beyond must demonstrate they have met the high school standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Students in the Class of 2010 and beyond also must meet the standards in science. Before students can use alternative assessments to obtain a Certificate of Achievement, the Legislature must formally approve the use of any alternative assessments.

Students demonstrate they have met high school standards and obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement in one of two ways:

- 1) By meeting the standards as measured by the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL); or
- 2) Through an alternative assessment or an appeal, if a student has not met a standard after taking the WASL twice.

The alternative assessments must be comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge that students must demonstrate on the WASL. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is to develop recommendations for the assessments and appeals.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Beginning in the 2006-07 school year, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will implement two objective alternative assessment methods. The alternative assessments are for students to demonstrate achievement of the state standards in content areas they did not meet on the Washington assessment of student learning. A student may access one or both of the alternatives if they have retaken the Washington assessment of student learning at least once. The Superintendent of Public Instruction may also require additional eligibility criteria.

The two alternative methods available to students include:

- 1) A combination of a student's grades in applicable courses and the student's highest score on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL); and
- 2) An evaluation of a collection of the students work samples, under the supervision of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

By June 1, 2006, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must implement a process for students to appeal the score they received on the high school assessment. By January 1, 2007, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will also implement guidelines and appeals processes for waiving statutory requirements for a certificate of academic achievement and to the certificate of individual achievement for students who transfer to a Washington public school in their junior or senior year or have a special unavoidable circumstance. The Superintendent of Public Instruction may adopt rules to implement the alternative assessment and appeals processes.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction must explore using existing mathematics assessments in languages other than English as an alternative assessment option. In addition, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to develop and report back to the Legislature on the development of additional alternative assessment options for mathematics.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Legislature requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to explore using existing mathematics assessments in languages other than English as an alternative assessment option. In addition, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to develop and report back to the Legislature on the development of additional alternative assessment options for mathematics.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This is a good idea because students will be able to put this together in a less stressful environment. It is good educational practice and allows students to create tasks that would be of interest to them. The bill levels the playing field for all students. Alternative assessments give students the opportunity to demonstrate competency beyond paper and pencil tests. This is the right thing to do and it doesn't water down the process. These alternative assessments give students the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do. The bill provides two appropriate assessments for students. This is a good first step, but the Legislature should also look at other possibilities in the future. The state should implement both alternative assessments at the same time. The Legislature should make this a regular assessment for students, not just an alternative. The bill should support broad concepts of alternative ways to assess students, and support opportunities for students to show their skills in alternative ways that are comparable in rigor to the WASL.

Testimony Other: The Legislature should approve multiple measure assessments. It is difficult to give support to something that has not been fully piloted. There is concern with the grade cohort option available. There are not enough teachers. There is concern that the content portion of the alternative assessment limits students.

Who Testified: PRO: Terry Bergeson, OSPI; Bob Butts, OSPI; Gil Mendoza, Tacoma School District; Marsha Denton-Fritz, Issaquah School District; Marc Frazer, Washington Roundtable; Don Rash, AWSP; Mary Kinfield, PTA; Juanita Doyen, Parent Empowerment Network; Norm Wisner, AESD; Nancy Atwood, AEA; Leslie Goldstein, OSPI.

OTHER: Alton McDonald, National Autism Network; Christie Perkins, WSSEC; Gary King, WEA; Susi Wright, Tulalip Tribes/TLC.