

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6780

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 1, 2006  
Ways & Means, February 7, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to mathematics and science education.

**Brief Description:** Creating a mathematics/science scholar high school diploma and scholarship.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kohl-Welles, Carrell, McAuliffe, Weinstein, Esser, Pridemore, Berkey, Delvin, Keiser and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 1/25/06, 2/1/06 [DPS-WM, DNP].

Ways & Means: 2/6/06, 2/7/06 [DPS(EKHE), DNP, w/oRec].

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

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6780 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Pflug.

**Staff:** Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6780 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; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Rockefeller and Schoesler.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Brandland, Parlette and Roach.

**Staff:** Steve Jones (786-7440)

**Background:** The Legislature has delegated the authority to determine minimum high school graduation requirements to the State Board of Education (SBE). Among mandated courses, the requirements currently established by the SBE include two credits in mathematics and two credits in science.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HEC Board) establishes the minimum admissions standards for all public universities and colleges in Washington State. Among other course requirements, entering freshmen must have earned three credits in mathematics, two credits of science, and two credits of the same foreign language.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Mathematics/Science Scholar designation on the high school diploma is created. The diploma will be awarded to public high school students and approved private high school students, at the discretion of the approved private school, who satisfy these requirements:

- 1) successfully earn:
  - a) four high school math credits (including calculus),
  - b) at least three science credits (including chemistry and physics),
  - c) at least three credits of world language (other than English);
- 2) receive scores of three or higher on at least 2 Advanced Placement exams;
- 3) earn a high school grade point average of 3.5 or higher; and
- 4) meet the state standards in all content areas of the high school level Washington

Assessment of Student Achievement.

Full tuition scholarships will be available to students who 1) obtain a Mathematics/Science Scholar High School Diploma, 2) pursue an undergraduate degree in a mathematics or science-related field, and 3) qualify for a scholarship under the ranking system developed by the HEC Board. Students majoring in theology are not eligible for the scholarship. The scholarship can only be used for undergraduate coursework, beginning in the student's second year, at accredited institutions of higher education in Washington state or in Oregon counties that border Washington.

The HEC Board is responsible for developing a ranking system to determine priority for awarding the scholarship. The ranking system shall consider various factors, such as the number of math and science classes the applicant completed during his or her first year of higher education, the GPA of the applicant during his or her first year, and other criteria that the HEC Board deems appropriate. Scholarships shall be awarded to as many eligible students as possible using this ranking system.

The HEC Board is authorized to adopt rules for implementation and is directed to establish the time frame within which the student must use the scholarship. Additionally, the HEC Board may establish satisfactory progress standards for the continued receipt of the scholarship.

A new Mathematics/Science High School Scholar Diploma scholarship account is created in the custody of the state treasury. The HEC Board shall deposit all funds received for this program into the account and has sole authority for disbursement authorizations. This self-sustaining account shall consist of funds appropriated by the Legislature for the scholarship program, private contributions to the program, and refunds of scholarships.

A technical change is made to make clear that the State Board of Education is not requires to establish high school graduation requirements for the Mathematics/Science Scholar High School Diploma.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute amends the concept of creating a new diploma to instead create a designation on the existing diploma. The emergency clause is removed.

**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:** The WASL measures student performance at a relatively low level, and does not do enough for high-achieving students. The current direction with a focus on minimum standards is good, but we are doomed in terms of global competitiveness if minimum standards are all that we focus on. This bill is a good step towards combating our decline in global competitiveness. The number of math and science seats in higher education institutions should also be increased; it does not benefit students to be encouraged to enter these disciplines if there is not enough capacity to satisfy the demand. The bill is good, but does not account for the students who either do not have access to these courses through their local high school or who do not have sufficient funds to pay for the A.P. exams. There are some minor technical amendments that need to be incorporated before the bill goes forward.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; Dave Burgess, Lake Stevens School District; Nani Jackins Park & John Klacik, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Leslie Goldstein, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.