

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5477

As of March 11, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to high school diplomas.

**Brief Description:** Delineating standard diplomas and applied diplomas.

**Sponsors:** Senators Roach and Litzow.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/08/13.

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

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** The State Board of Education establishes the state minimum high school graduation requirements. Local school districts may establish additional local requirements to be met. There is currently only one high school diploma.

Currently to obtain a high school diploma, a student must:

- earn 20 credits, as specified in the chart below. The current 20 credits required for the graduating classes of 2013 through 2015 will be redistributed for the Class of 2016
- pass the required state high school assessments or an approved alternative assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics;
- complete a culminating project; and
- complete a high school and beyond plan.

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<b>High School Course</b>	<b>Graduating Classes of 2013 – 2015 High School Graduation Credit Requirements</b>	<b>Graduating Class of 2016 High School Graduation Credit Requirements</b>
English	3	4–207 of 247 districts already require
Math	3	3
Science	2–1 lab	2–1 lab
Social Studies	2.5	3–208 of 247 districts already require
Arts	1	1

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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.*

Health & Fitness	2	2
World Language	0	0
Occupational Education	1	1
Career Concentration	0	0
Electives	5.5	4
<b>Total Credits required</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>

**Summary of Bill:** The State Board of Education (SBE) must create two diplomas: a standard diploma, same as the current, and an applied diploma. In order to earn an applied diploma the student is not required to take or pass the statewide high school assessments but must meet the following requirements:

- instead of meeting the credit requirements for English and mathematics, the student may choose to earn four credits of technology and four credits of arts. The arts credits may include industrial arts, agricultural arts, or fine arts courses, or apprenticeships;
- demonstrate minimum competency in English and mathematics by meeting the state standard on the eighth grade statewide assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics; and
- pass at least two high school courses in English or mathematics. The math classes do not have to be Algebra or Geometry.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 4, 2013.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Too many of our students will not or do not think that they will graduate from high school and go to college. They often have additional challenges and different aptitudes than those students who plan to go to college. We need to give these students hope, a way to stay in school, and provide them with saleable skills for their future so that they can be productive citizens. We need to provide our students with a career and technical pathway. Our school district offers differentiated instruction to our students and we are committed to meeting our students need. This bill allows options to students over the one size fits all diploma that we have now. An applied diploma is an important way to recognize student accomplishments. When we require all students to meet college entry requirements, we limit student opportunities in high school because students must keep trying to meet the higher academic requirements. This causes them to miss opportunities to take career and technical education classes or participate in skill center programs. This bill gives students an option to move forward with their life and learn skilled labor skills.

CON: Earning a high school diploma signifies that a student is prepared for the next stage of their life whether it is career or college. The majority of future jobs will need some level of post-secondary education even if they want to go straight into a career. The pathway needs to be rigorous for all students. We do not need a two-tier system. An applied diploma does not

align with SBE recommendations for a 24 credit high school diploma, which has 17 core courses and seven more that are tailored more to the choices of the student. Minimum high school diploma requirements need to create a core content that applies to all students for life, with sufficient flexibility for students to follow their passions. We should not track students into something when they are 14 or 15. Current law provides for alternate ways for students to meet the high school assessment requirements, which are not a paper and pencil test but a portfolio of student work.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Roach, prime sponsor; Cindy Meyers, Mick Miller, Walla Walla School District.

CON: Ben Rarick, SBE; Jana Carlisle, Partnership for Learning.