
Education Committee

SB 5639

Brief Description: Concerning alternative student assessments.

Sponsors: Senators Conway and Zeiger.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows students who meet specified requirements, including participating in instructional activity at a qualifying technical college during the current school year, to utilize alternative assessment options for statewide student assessments without first taking the standard assessment.

Hearing Date: 3/16/17

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Statewide Student Assessment System.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), is authorized to maintain and revise a statewide academic assessment system to measure student knowledge and skills on state learning standards and to use it for purposes of state and federal accountability. The state assessment system must cover the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science for elementary, middle, and high school years. The federal Every Student Achieves Act (ESSA) requires states to assess students based on state learning standards in reading and mathematics in each of grades 3 through 8 and one high school grade, as well as in at least one grade in elementary, middle, and high school in science.

A Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) or a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) is one of the requirements for graduation from a Washington public high school. To obtain a CAA, a student must meet state standards (established in performance scores adopted by the SBE) on required statewide assessments. Students requiring special education who are not appropriately assessed by the state assessment system, even with accommodations, may earn a

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CIA through a variety of ways to demonstrate skills and abilities commensurate with their individual education programs.

Current law also includes provisions for waiving specific requirements pertaining to the CAA for students who transferred to a Washington public school in their junior or senior year or who have special, unavoidable circumstances.

Alternative Assessment Options.

Alternative assessment options exist to earn a CAA for those who have taken an assessment at least once. These include:

- grade comparison, provided the student has a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or higher on a four-point grading scale;
- earning a high enough score on the SAT or ACT, as determined according to performance scores adopted by the SBE;
- earning a high enough score on an Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate exam; and
- a collection of evidence process, scored at the state level or by regional panels of educators.

Technical High Schools on Technical College Campuses.

School districts and technical colleges may enter into interlocal agreements that permit high school students to attend courses on the technical college campuses. Students enrolled in these technical high schools do not pay tuition costs, but are responsible for the costs of books, consumables, tool and lab fees, and transportation. There are three technical colleges that participate in this program:

- Lake Washington Technical Academy at the Lake Washington Institute of Technology;
- Northwest Career and Technical High School at Clover Park Technical College; and
- Technical High School at Bates Technical College.

According to recent enrollment data, approximately 900 students are enrolled in the technical high school programs.

Summary of Bill:

Students who meet the following requirements may use an authorized alternative assessment without first taking the applicable standard statewide student assessment:

- students who are enrolled in a school district with which a technical college has a signed interlocal agreement on file with the SPI;
- students who have actually participated in instructional activity at the technical college during the current school year;
- students who are enrolled tuition-free;
- students who are enrolled in the school district for the purpose of earning a high school diploma or certificate; and
- students who were under 21 years old at the beginning of the school year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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