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**HOUSE BILL 1308**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Stonier, Dye, Ortiz-Self, Tharinger, Riccelli, Reed, and Pollet; by request of State Board of Education

AN ACT Relating to high school graduation pathway options; amending RCW 28A.655.250 and 28A.655.260; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) In 2019 the legislature created a system of multiple graduation pathway options, which took effect beginning with the class of 2020. The legislature intended for the graduation pathways to be student-focused, adaptable, rigorous, and meaningful ways for students to demonstrate appropriate readiness in support of their individualized career and college goals.

(2) The legislature anticipated that school districts might face barriers to implementing the pathways and students might face barriers to accessing the pathway options. The legislature charged the state board of education with research on the first three years of implementation to identify barriers and provide recommendations for changes to the existing pathways and additional pathway options.

(3) While implementation of the graduation pathway options was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the research on early implementation identified access and equity barriers that would exist even without the pandemic. The research shows that the initial set of graduation pathway options do not meet the needs of all students. The research found some students completing pathways that do not align with their individual goals for after high school, in which case the pathway is not serving its intended purpose. Overall, students, families, and educators report a need for additional relevant and authentic options.

(4) The legislature recognizes that students can demonstrate readiness in multiple ways and recognizes the need to expand graduation pathways in order to provide options that are student-focused, individualized, relevant, and that support all student needs. Research shows that performance-based assessments are valid ways of measuring students' readiness for success in college and careers. Further, research shows that performance-based assessments are associated with increased student engagement, skill development, critical thinking, and postsecondary success. The legislature recognizes that a performance-based graduation pathway option supports the state's transition to mastery-based learning.

(5) Therefore, the legislature intends to create graduation pathway options that allow students to demonstrate their readiness in performance-based ways, in addition to the existing test-based and course-based options, and in core subject areas that most strongly align with the student's individualized goals for high school and beyond. Further, the legislature intends to create ongoing requirements to monitor the graduation pathway options implementation at both the state and local levels to ensure accountability and equitable offerings. In providing a wider variety of graduation pathway options, the state maintains its commitment to high standards for earning a meaningful high school diploma that prepares students for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, civic engagement, and lifelong learning.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.655.250 and 2021 c 7 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) Beginning with the class of 2020, except as provided in RCW 28A.230.320, graduation from a public high school and the earning of a high school diploma must include the following:

(i) Satisfying the graduation requirements established by the state board of education under RCW 28A.230.090 and any graduation requirements established by the applicable public high school or school district;

(ii) Satisfying credit requirements for graduation;

(iii) Demonstrating career and college readiness through completion of the high school and beyond plan as required by RCW 28A.230.090; and

(iv) Meeting the requirements of at least one graduation pathway option established in this section.

(b) Successful completion of the components in (a) of this subsection together signals a student's readiness to graduate with a meaningful high school diploma that fulfills the diploma purpose established in RCW 28A.230.090.

(2) The pathway options established in this section are intended to provide a student with multiple ((~~pathways to graduating with a meaningful high school diploma that are tailored to the goals of the student~~)) ways, including test-based, course-based, and performance-based options, to demonstrate readiness in furtherance of the student's individual goals for high school and beyond. For the purposes of this section, "demonstrate readiness" means the student is able to apply state learning standards in: (a) English language arts and mathematics; or (b) two or more core subject areas that most directly align with the student's high school and beyond plan goals under RCW 28A.230.090. A student may choose to pursue one or more of the pathway options under ((~~(b)~~)) subsection (3) of this ((~~subsection~~)) section, but any pathway option used by a student to demonstrate career and college readiness must be in alignment with the student's high school and beyond plan.

((~~(b)~~)) (3) The following graduation pathway options may be used to demonstrate career and college readiness in accordance with ((~~(a)(iv)~~)) subsection (1)(a)(iv) of this ((~~subsection~~)) section:

((~~(i)~~)) (a) Meet or exceed the graduation standard established by the state board of education under RCW 28A.305.130 on the statewide high school assessments in English language arts and mathematics as provided for under RCW 28A.655.070;

((~~(ii)~~)) (b) Complete and qualify for college credit in dual credit courses in English language arts and mathematics. For the purposes of this subsection, "dual credit course" means a course in which a student qualifies for college and high school credit in English language arts or mathematics upon successfully completing the course;

((~~(iii)~~)) (c) Earn high school credit in a high school transition course in English language arts and mathematics, an example of which includes a bridge to college course. For the purposes of this subsection ((~~(1)(b)(iii)~~)) (3)(c), "high school transition course" means an English language arts or mathematics course offered in high school where successful completion by a high school student ensures the student college-level placement at participating institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016. High school transition courses must satisfy core or elective credit graduation requirements established by the state board of education. A student's successful completion of a high school transition course does not entitle the student to be admitted to an institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016;

((~~(iv)~~)) (d) Earn high school credit, with a C+ grade((~~, or receiving a three or higher on the AP exam, or equivalent,~~)) or higher in AP, international baccalaureate, or Cambridge international courses in English language arts and mathematics; or ((~~receiving a four or higher on international baccalaureate exams. For English language arts, successfully completing any of the following courses meets the standard: AP English language and composition literature, macroeconomics, microeconomics, psychology, United States history, world history, United States government and politics, or comparative government and politics; or any of the international baccalaureate individuals and societies courses. For mathematics, successfully completing any of the following courses meets the standard: AP statistics, computer science, computer science principles, or calculus; or any of the international baccalaureate mathematics courses~~)) earn at least the minimum scores outlined in RCW 28B.10.054(1) on the corresponding exams. The state board of education shall establish by rule the list of AP, international baccalaureate, and Cambridge international courses of which successful completion meets the standard in this subsection for English language arts and for mathematics;

((~~(v)~~)) (e) Meet or exceed the scores established by the state board of education for the mathematics portion and the reading, English, or writing portion of the SAT or ACT;

((~~(vi)~~)) (f) Meet any combination of at least one English language arts option and at least one mathematics option established in ((~~(b)(i) through (v)~~)) (a) through (e) of this subsection ((~~(1)~~));

((~~(vii)~~)) (g) Meet standard in the armed services vocational aptitude battery; ((~~and~~

~~(viii)~~)) (h) Complete a sequence of career and technical education courses that are relevant to a student's postsecondary pathway, including those leading to workforce entry, state or nationally approved apprenticeships, or postsecondary education, and that meet either: The curriculum requirements of core plus programs for aerospace, maritime, health care, information technology, or construction and manufacturing; or the minimum criteria identified in RCW 28A.700.030. Nothing in this subsection ((~~(1)(b)(viii)~~)) (3)(h) requires a student to enroll in a preparatory course that is approved under RCW 28A.700.030 for the purposes of demonstrating career and college readiness under this section((~~.~~

~~(2)~~)) ; and

(i)(i) Complete a performance-based learning experience through which the student applies knowledge and skills in a real-world context, providing evidence of applying state learning standards in at least two of the mandatory core subject areas identified by the state board of education under RCW 28A.230.090 that are most directly aligned with the student's education or career goals as stated in the student's high school and beyond plan. The performance-based learning experience may take a variety of forms, such as a project, practicum, work-related experience, community service, or cultural activity, and may result in a variety of products that can be evaluated, such as a performance, presentation, portfolio, report, film, or exhibit.

(ii) The performance-based learning experience must conform to state requirements established in rule by the state board of education addressing the safety and quality of the performance-based learning experience and the authentic performance-based assessment criteria for determining the student has applied the applicable learning standards. The rules adopted by the state board of education may allow external parties, including community leaders and professionals, to participate in the evaluation of the student's performance and must include at least one certificated teacher with an endorsement in each relevant subject area or with other applicable qualifications as permitted by the professional educator standards board.

(iii) Prior to offering the performance-based learning experience graduation pathway in this subsection (3)(i) to students, the school district board of directors shall adopt a written policy in conformity with applicable state requirements.

(4) While the legislature encourages school districts to make all pathway options established in this section available to their high school students, and to expand their pathway options until that goal is met, school districts have discretion in determining which pathway options under this section they will offer to students.

((~~(3)~~)) School districts, however, must annually provide students in grades eight through 12 and their parents or legal guardians with comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options offered by the school district and are strongly encouraged to begin providing this information beginning in sixth grade. School districts must provide this information in a manner that conforms with the school district's language access policy and procedures as required under RCW 28A.183.040.

(5) The state board of education shall adopt rules to implement the graduation pathway options established in this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.655.260 and 2021 c 144 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The superintendent of public instruction shall collect the following information from school districts: Which of the graduation pathways under RCW 28A.655.250 are available to students at each of the school districts; and the number of students using each graduation pathway for graduation purposes. This information shall be reported annually to the education committees of the legislature beginning January 10, 2021. To the extent feasible, data on student participation in each of the graduation pathways shall be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and receipt of free or reduced-price lunch.

(2) ((~~Beginning August 1, 2019, the state board of education shall survey interested parties regarding what additional graduation pathways should be added to the existing graduation pathways identified in RCW 28A.655.250 and whether modifications should be made to any of the existing pathways. Interested parties shall include at a minimum: High school students; recent high school graduates; representatives from the state board for community and technical colleges and four-year higher education institutions; representatives from the apprenticeship and training council; associations representing business; members of the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee; and associations representing educators, school board members, school administrators, superintendents, and parents. The state board of education shall provide reports to the education committees of the legislature by August 1, 2020, and December 10, 2022, summarizing the information collected in the surveys.~~

~~(3) Using the data reported by the superintendent of public instruction under subsection (1) of this section, the state board of education shall survey a sampling of the school districts unable to provide all of the graduation pathways under RCW 28A.655.250 in order to identify the types of barriers to implementation school districts have. Using the survey results from this subsection and the survey results collected under subsection (2) of this section, the state board of education shall review the existing graduation pathways, suggested changes to those graduation pathways, and the options for additional graduation pathways, and shall provide a report to the education committees of the legislature by December 10, 2022, on the following:~~

~~(a) Recommendations on whether changes to the existing pathways should be made and what those changes should be;~~

~~(b) The barriers school districts have to offering all of the graduation pathways and recommendations for ways to eliminate or reduce those barriers for school districts;~~

~~(c) Whether all students have equitable access to all of the graduation pathways and, if not, recommendations for reducing the barriers students may have to accessing all of the graduation pathways; and~~

~~(d) Whether additional graduation pathways should be included and recommendations for what those pathways should be~~)) The state board of education shall review and monitor the implementation of the graduation pathway options to ensure school district compliance with requirements established under RCW 28A.655.250 and subsection (3) of this section. The reviews and monitoring required by this subsection may be conducted concurrently with other oversight and monitoring conducted by the state board of education. The information shall be collected annually and reported to the education committees of the legislature by January 10, 2025, and biennially thereafter.

(3)(a) At least annually, school districts shall examine data on student groups participating in and completing each graduation pathway option offered by the school district. At a minimum, the data on graduation pathway participation and completion must be disaggregated by the student groups described in RCW 28A.300.042 (1) and (3), and by:

(i) Gender;

(ii) Students who are the subject of a dependency proceeding pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW;

(iii) Students who are experiencing homelessness as defined in RCW 28A.300.542(4); and

(iv) Multilingual/English learners.

(b) If the results of the analysis required under (a) of this subsection show disproportionate participation and completion rates by student groups, then the school district shall identify reasons for the observed disproportionality and implement strategies as appropriate to ensure the graduation pathway options are equitably available to all students in the school district.

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