

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2110

As Passed House:

February 8, 2024

Title: An act relating to reorganizing statutory requirements governing high school graduation by reordering requirements, making nonsubstantive revisions, and removing expired provisions.

Brief Description: Reorganizing statutory requirements governing high school graduation.

Sponsors: Representatives Nance, Simmons, Callan, Lekanoff and Reeves.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/16/24, 1/25/24 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/8/24, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes nonsubstantive revisions to graduation requirement provisions without modifying the requirements or related school district and state agency duties and authorizations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Rude, Ranking Minority Member; McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Couture, Eslick, Harris, McClintock, Nance, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, Steele, Stonier and Timmons.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Overview of Graduation Requirements.

As established in statute, the purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner. To qualify for a high school diploma, public school students must satisfy credit and subject area requirements established by the Legislature and the State Board of Education (SBE), fulfill any locally established requirements, complete a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP), and meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway option.

Although graduation requirements are largely developed at the state level and subject to frequent revisions, determinations about student compliance with requirements are made at the school district level.

Credit and Subject Area Requirements.

Graduating students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas as determined by the SBE. Although the SBE adopts rules to implement the credit requirements, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction adopts the state's learning standards that guide the content of the courses.

Of the 24 required credits, 17 are in core subject areas, for example, English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. The remaining seven credits are more flexible: four are elective credits and three are personalized pathways credits determined by the student's interests and the HSBP. In limited circumstances, waivers for credit and subject area requirements can be granted to students.

The Legislature has also mandated instruction in specific subjects, examples of which include: cardiopulmonary resuscitation; AIDS prevention; comprehensive sexual health education; the constitutions of the United States and Washington; and civics in the form of a stand-alone course for high school students.

High School and Beyond Plans.

Each student must complete an HSBP. The purpose of the HSBP is to guide the student's high school experience and inform course taking that is aligned with the student's goals for education or training and career after high school.

The HSBP is initiated for students in grade 7 through the administration of a career interest and skills inventory. The HSBP must contain specific elements prescribed in statute, including: the identification of career goals and interest; an academic plan for course taking; evidence that the student has received certain financial aid program information; and a resume or activity log summarizing the student's education, work experience, extracurricular activities, and community service. The HSBP must be updated annually to review academic progress and inform future course taking, and revised as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs.

In addition to statutory requirements, school districts may also establish local HSBP requirements that serve the needs and interests of their students.

Graduation Pathways.

Legislation adopted in 2019 established graduation pathway requirements that began application with the graduating class of 2020, but implementation was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The stated intent of the pathway options is to provide students with multiple ways to demonstrate readiness in furtherance of their goals for high school and beyond. Students may choose one or more pathway, but any selected option must align with the student's HSBP.

The graduation pathways, which are established in statute and implemented through rules of the SBE, allow students to fulfill pathway requirements by:

- meeting or exceeding requirements on the statewide high school assessments in ELA and mathematics;
- completing and qualifying for college credit in dual-credit courses in ELA and mathematics;
- earning high school credit in a high school transition course that meets specific requirements in ELA and mathematics;
- earning high school credit with an appropriate grade or exam score in AP, International Baccalaureate, or Cambridge International courses in ELA and mathematics;
- meeting or exceeding requirements for the mathematics portion and the reading, English, or writing portion of the SAT or ACT;
- completing a performance-based learning experience through which the student demonstrates knowledge and skills in a real-world context, providing evidence that the student meets or exceeds state learning standards in ELA and mathematics;
- meeting any combination of at least one ELA option and at least one mathematics option stated above;
- meeting standard in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery; and
- completing a sequence of career and technical education courses that are relevant to the student's postsecondary pathway and that meet specific criteria.

School districts are encouraged to make all pathway options available to their students, and to expand their options until that goal is met, but school districts have discretion to determine which pathway options they offer.

Summary of Bill:

Numerous organizational and technical revisions are made to graduation requirement provisions without modifying the requirements or the related school district and state agency duties and authorizations. Examples of the nonsubstantive changes include consolidating graduation requirements into a specific statutory chapter, making grade and other references more consistent, and removing expired language.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This legislation strengthens our public schools because you should not need to graduate from law school to figure out graduation requirements. This bill makes the requirements more accessible and having better organization will also be beneficial for the State Board of Education.

This bill is a much needed statutory clean up. The structure of the bill better aligns the graduation requirements with their component parts.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Greg Nance, prime sponsor; and J. Lee Schultz, Washington State Board of Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.