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## Education Committee

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### SSB 5617

**Brief Description:** Concerning career and technical education course equivalencies.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Nguyen, Hasegawa, Lias, Lovelett, Nobles and Wilson, C.).

#### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires cooperative agreements for the operation and governance of skill centers to stipulate that Career and Technical Education (CTE) course equivalencies approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) or local course equivalencies adopted by the host school district must be honored by the other participating school districts of the skill center.
- Requires approved local or state equivalency CTE courses offered at a skill center, satellite skill center, or branch campus to be offered for academic credit to all students in participating school districts of the skill center.
- Establishes new notification requirements for schools regarding student opportunities to meet credit-based graduation requirements through CTE equivalency courses.
- Directs the SPI to convene a technical working group to determine potential equivalency coursework for technology-based competitive student activities, and to update a list of approved curriculum frameworks based on the work of the technical working group.

**Hearing Date:** 3/9/23

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

## **Background:**

### Career and Technical Education.

Career and technical education (CTE) is a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begins with an exploration of career options and supports basic academic and life skills. As articulated in statute, CTE enables the achievement of high academic standards, leadership, options for high-skill, high-wage employment preparation, and advanced and continuing education. Students must earn one CTE credit to qualify for graduation, but the State Board of Education (SBE) permits students to meet this requirement through a qualifying occupational education course.

Instruction in CTE is provided through two general course classifications—exploratory and preparatory—both of which must comply with numerous standards established by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Career and technical education instruction is delivered through programs at middle and high schools, through approved online courses, and at skill centers (including satellite and branch skill centers), the regional CTE instructional venues established by a cooperative agreement and operated by a host school district.

### Career and Technical Education Credits—Equivalencies.

A CTE course that meets equivalency requirements allows a student to meet core academic and graduation requirements by successfully completing the course. Each high school or school district board of directors must adopt course equivalencies for CTE courses offered to students in high schools and skill centers. As part of this requirement, each school district board of directors must develop a course equivalency approval procedure, and an equivalency may be for whole or partial credit.

### Duties of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The OSPI has numerous duties related to CTE course equivalencies established in statute. For example, the OSPI is required to support school district efforts to adopt course equivalencies by, in part, recommending a CTE curriculum that is suitable for equivalencies, publicizing best practices of districts in developing and adopting equivalencies, and providing related technical assistance and guidance to school districts.

The OSPI, in consultation with technical work groups convened for this purpose, must also develop and approve curriculum frameworks for a list of CTE courses with academic content that is considered equivalent in full, or part, to academic courses meeting graduation requirements. The content of the courses on the list must be aligned with the state's learning standards as well as industry standards. At the local level, school districts must grant academic course equivalency based on the approved list of CTE courses, but districts may also adopt local equivalency courses.

Subject to funding requirements the OSPI must also create methodologies for implementing equivalency crediting on a broader scale and facilitate its implementation by:

- implementing statewide CTE course equivalency frameworks for high schools and skill

- centers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and
- providing competitive grant funds to school districts to increase the integration and rigor of academic instruction in CTE equivalency courses.

School districts and the OSPI must satisfy equivalency crediting reporting requirements. School districts must annually report to the OSPI the annual number of:

- students participating in state-approved equivalency courses; and
- state approved equivalency credit courses offered in school districts and skill centers.

Additionally, each December 1, the OSPI must submit the following information to the Governor, the SBE, and the appropriate committees of the Legislature:

- the selected list of CTE equivalency courses and their curriculum frameworks approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and
- a summary of the school district equivalency crediting information reported annually to the OSPI.

### **Summary of Bill:**

Numerous CTE equivalency course and crediting requirements are modified or established for school districts, schools, and the OSPI.

#### Requirements for Schools and School Districts.

*Skill Centers.* The interdistrict cooperative agreement between participating school districts for the operation and governance of a skill center must stipulate that any course equivalencies approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) or the host school district as an adopted local course equivalency must be honored by other participating school districts. The list of approved local and state equivalency courses must be provided to the participating districts on an annual basis by September 1, and students served at any core, branch, or satellite skill center campus must have access to academic credit for any approved local or state equivalency courses in accordance with applicable requirements. Additionally, approved local or state equivalency courses at any core, branch, or satellite skill center must be offered for academic credit for all enrolled students from participating districts.

*Notifications.* Prior to course scheduling or course registration for the next school term, each public school that serves students in any grades 9 through 12 must notify all students and their parents or legal guardians of the opportunities that exist for students to meet credit-based graduation requirements through CTE equivalency courses, including those available within the school district or at a skill center.

#### Requirements for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

*Expanding Equivalency Implementation.* Provisions directing the OSPI, subject to funding requirements, to create methodologies for implementing equivalency crediting on a broader scale and facilitate its implementation are modified to require:

- implementing statewide approved CTE course equivalency frameworks *and* local course

equivalencies authorized for high schools and skill centers (without referencing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics); and

- a review of the implementation of course equivalency requirements for school districts, and providing technical assistance to districts to ensure that state course equivalencies are being consistently offered for academic credit for students at high schools and skill centers.

*Reporting Requirements.* The OSPI's annual course equivalency report to the Governor, the SBE, and the appropriate committees of the Legislature must include a summary of implementation efforts and review findings related to methodologies for implementing equivalency crediting on a broader scale, including recommendations for increasing access to equivalency coursework.

*Technical Working Group.* Subject to funding requirements, the SPI must convene a technical working group to determine potential equivalency development of coursework for technology-based competitive student activities in alignment with the arts and other content areas as applicable. This technical working group must include educators from school districts or educational service districts that have experience with technology-based competitive student activities.

The SPI must develop and approve course equivalencies to include in the updated CTE equivalency course list based on the work of the technical working group.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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