

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1308

As of March 13, 2023

Title: An act relating to high school graduation pathway options.

Brief Description: Concerning high school graduation pathway options.

Sponsors: Representatives Stonier, Dye, Ortiz-Self, Tharinger, Riccelli, Reed and Pollet; by request of State Board of Education.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/2/23, 63-34.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/13/23.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes an additional graduation pathway option of completing a performance-based learning experience.
- Establishes requirements for the performance-based learning experience pathway and duties the State Board of Education (SBE) and school districts must meet prior to offering the pathway.
- Directs the SBE to monitor implementation and school district compliance with requirements.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: High School Graduation Requirements. Washington State students must meet various requirements to graduate high school and receive a diploma. Students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas determined by the State Board of Education (SBE). Students must also complete a High School and Beyond Plan (HBSP) and satisfy any local requirements. Graduating students in the class of 2021 and subsequent classes must earn 17 core academic credits, four elective credits, and three locally determined

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.

personalized pathway credits.

Students must meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway to receive their high school diploma. These include:

- meeting or exceeding a set standard on statewide English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments;
- completing and qualifying for college credit in dual credit courses in ELA and mathematics;
- earning high school credit in a high school transition course in ELA and mathematics;
- earning high school credit with a C+ grade or receiving particular scores in AP, international baccalaureate, or Cambridge international courses;
- meeting or exceeding set scores on the SAT or ACT;
- meeting standards in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery; or
- completing a sequence of career and technical education (CTE) courses.

School districts are encouraged to make all graduation pathway options available to their students, and to expand their list of options until all are offered, but districts are granted discretion in determining which pathway options they offer.

State law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to collect information on graduation pathway availability and usage from school districts, and to report this information annually to the education committees of the Legislature. Legislation in 2019 also directed SBE to survey a sampling of school districts unable to provide all of the graduation pathways to identify barriers to implementation. As part of these requirements, SBE submitted these in a report in December 2022 along with suggested changes to graduation pathways.

Summary of Bill: Additional Graduation Pathway Option. An additional graduation pathway option is established. School districts may offer students the opportunity to meet graduation pathway requirements by completing 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 core subject areas identified by SBE that are most directly aligned with the student's education or career goals as stated in their HSBP.

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, examples of which include a performance, presentation, portfolio, report, film, or exhibit.

The performance-based learning experience must conform to state requirements established in rule by SBE that address the safety and quality of the performance-based learning experience, and the authentic performance-based assessment criteria for determining that the student has applied the applicable learning standards. The rules may allow external

parties, including community leaders and professionals, to participate in the evaluation of the student's performance, and must require the evaluation include at least one certificated teacher with an endorsement in each relevant subject area or with other applicable qualifications.

Prior to offering the performance-based learning experience pathway option to students, the school district board of directors must adopt a written policy in conformity with applicable state requirements.

Provision of Information to Students and Families. School districts must annually provide students in grades 8 through 12, and their parents or legal guardians, with comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options offered by the school district. School districts must provide this information in a manner that conforms with the district's language access policy and procedures, and are encouraged to begin providing this information to students when they are in sixth grade.

Review and Monitoring Requirements. SBE must review and monitor the implementation of the graduation pathway options to ensure school district compliance with graduation pathway requirements, and school district data and analysis obligations. The reviews and monitoring may be conducted concurrently with other oversight and monitoring conducted by SBE. The review and monitoring information must be collected annually and reported to the education committees of the Legislature every two years, beginning January 10, 2025.

At least annually, school districts must examine data on student groups participating in and completing each graduation pathway option offered by the district. The applicable student data must be disaggregated by a minimum number of student groups, including race and ethnicity subgroups, and by:

- gender;
- students who are the subject of a dependency proceeding;
- students who are experiencing homelessness; and
- multilingual/English learners.

If the results of the analysis show disproportionate participation and completion rates by student groups, the school district must identify reasons for the observed disproportionality and implement appropriate strategies to ensure the graduation pathway options are equitably available to all students.

Provisions directing SBE to perform completed survey and reporting duties related to graduation pathway options are repealed.

Graduation Pathway Modifications. SBE is directed to establish the list of AP, IB, and Cambridge international courses that can be used for meeting English language arts and mathematics for the AP, IB, Cambridge international courses graduation pathway option, rather than having qualifying courses delineated in statute.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This graduation pathway would be highly engaging for students who may not have a graduation pathway that fits their personal needs. This is a permissive pathway that would fit a student's individual needs. The bill would not add to students' 24-credit graduation requirement. The addition of the performance pathway would provide greater flexibility to students' education in a way that is meaningful to them. Principals want flexibility for students to choose the path that fits them best. Districts may want to choose to have this pathway as it could be a more engaging pathway for students. Current pathways do not align with all students' chosen path. This pathway option would be more student-focused and equitable. There are currently limited options for students with particular educational needs. For some students, current pathway limitations have forced students to take courses not in their educational plans in order to graduate. Other options should be added to demonstrate career or educational readiness, including proof of acceptance into a postsecondary program or full-time employment. Single tests are not a good indicator of student proficiency.

CON: This bill would allow students to graduate high school without demonstrating basic English and math skills, instead allowing students to pick any two core subjects on which to focus their performance.

OTHER: Students already demonstrate readiness through mastery in earning 24 credits for graduation. Data and reporting requirements could be further modified to track student outcomes. The performance option should be focused on demonstrating math and English language arts standards. The bill language could be tightened to ensure that we do not water down graduation requirements. It is important to prepare students so that they are sufficient in the fundamental skills necessary for college success.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Monica Jurado Stonier, Prime Sponsor; Isaac Emerson, Student for Washington State PTA; Logan Endres, Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA); Randy Spaulding, Washington State Board of Education; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals; Michelle Nims, Washington State PTA; Bill Oman; Holly Finley, WSASP; Kimberly Headrick, Medical Lake School District; Josie Cummings, BIAW; Gary Wray, BIAW; Marin Marks, Washington School Counselor Association; Scott Kerwien, Spokane Public Schools; Nick Massie, SW WA Contractors Assoc.; Rep Paul Harris.

CON: Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable.

OTHER: Kim Reykdal, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Ben Mitchell, Foundation for Tacoma Students; Juliet Schindler, College Success Foundation; Steve Smith, Black Education Strategy Roundtable.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.