SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5849

As of January 16, 2024

Title: An act relating to a computer science competency graduation requirement.

Brief Description: Concerning a computer science competency graduation requirement.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Nobles, Boehnke, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Nguyen, Shewmake, Trudeau and Wilson, C..

Brief History:
  Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/17/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that all students show competency in high school learning standards related to computer science in order to graduate from high school, beginning with the 2029 graduating class.

- Provides various options in which students may demonstrate competency in computer science learning standards.

- Specifies that the requirements do not increase the number of high school credits required for graduation.

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to initiate a review and update of the state computer science learning standards.

- Modifies the goals that, to the maximum extent possible, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must integrate when periodically revising state learning standards.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

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: <u>High School Graduation Requirements.</u> Washington State students must meet various requirements to graduate high school and receive a diploma. Students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas as determined by the State Board of Education (SBE). Students must also complete a High School and Beyond Plan (HBSP), meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway, 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 personalized pathway credits.

<u>Program of Basic Education and State Learning Goals.</u> Washington's program of basic education establishes four goals for school districts pertaining to the opportunity for every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential for practicing certain academic skills and concepts.

The third goal addresses thinking "analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate technology literacy and fluency as well as different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems." The fourth goal addresses "the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities."

<u>State Learning Standards.</u> The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to develop state learning standards that identify the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be able to do. Learning standards are based on the student learning goals of basic education as laid out in statute. State law also requires OSPI to periodically revise the state learning standards as needed.

Summary of Bill: <u>Computer Science Graduation Requirements.</u> Beginning with the 2029 graduating class, all students are required to show competency in the high school learning standards related to computer science in order to graduate from high school.

Students may demonstrate this computer science competency graduation requirement via:
- completion of a stand-alone computer science course aligned to the state learning standards;
- completion of a different subject matter course where the state computer science learning standards are embedded with other learning standards; or
- a demonstration of competency of the foundational skills established in the computer science state learning standards.

The demonstration of competency could include completion of a competency examination or any of the options allowed by rules adopted by the SBE that address mastery-based crediting, such as:
- completing a locally established portfolio or culminating project;
- participating in supervised work experience or other outside school experience;
- taking career and technical education classes;

- taking courses offered by regional or community centers or programs;
- receiving credits earned at a postsecondary institution; or
- providing documentation of a prior learning activity that demonstrates proficiency of the identified learning standards.

Consideration of seat time or instructional hours is not required to demonstrate competency. Students must be allowed to present multiple types of evidence for the demonstration of competency. Students in grade 12 who have not been able to show computer science competency because of previous residence outside the state may have the requirement waived by their principal.

The bill specifies that the additional computer science graduation requirements do not increase the number of high school credits required for graduation as established by the SBE.

Computer Science Learning Standards. OSPI shall initiate a review and update of the state computer science learning standards for students in grades kindergarten through grade 12. In developing the update of the state computer science learning standards, OSPI shall review standards adopted by other states and consult with nonprofit organizations that have demonstrated expertise in assisting states in developing computer science learning standards.

State Learning Goals. To the maximum extent possible the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall integrate technology literacy and fluency from goal three in the state learning standards, as opposed to specifically integrating goal four.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 8, 2024.

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

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