

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 2785

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 23, 2006
Ways & Means, February 27, 2006

Title: An act relating to authorizing alternative methods of assessment and appeal processes for the certificate of academic achievement.

Brief Description: Authorizing alternative methods of assessment and appeal processes for the certificate of academic achievement.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Quall, Tom, P. Sullivan, Hunter, Morrell, Nixon, Rodne, Roberts, Schual-Berke, Simpson, Springer, Sells, Lantz, Linville, Dunshee and Kagi; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/06, 94-4.

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/15/06, 2/23/06 [DPA-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/27/06 [DPA(EKHE), w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Higher Education; Weinstein, Vice Chair, Early Learning & K-12; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Delvin, Eide, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Pflug, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland and Hewitt.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: Under current law, beginning with the Class of 2008, high school students must obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement or a Certificate of Individual Achievement to graduate. These certificates are in addition to other state and local graduation requirements.

To obtain a Certificate of Achievement, students in the Class of 2008 and beyond must demonstrate that they have met the high school standards in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students in the Class of 2010 and beyond also must meet the standards in science. Before students can use alternative assessments to obtain a Certificate of Achievement, the Legislature must formally approve the use of any alternative assessments.

Students demonstrate that they have met high school standards and obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement in one of two ways:

- 1) By meeting the standards as measured by the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL); or
- 2) Through an alternative assessment or an appeal, if a student has not met a standard after taking the WASL twice.

The alternative assessments must be comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge that students must demonstrate on the WASL. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is to develop recommendations for the assessments and appeals. In order to implement the alternative assessments, the Legislature must formally approve them.

Summary of Amended Bill: Beginning in the 2006-07 school year, the SPI is directed to implement three objective alternative assessment methods for students to demonstrate achievement of the state standards in content areas where they were not successful on the high school WASL. A student applying for an alternative assessment must meet the eligibility criteria under current law and other eligibility criteria established by the SPI.

One of the alternative assessment methods is a comparison of the applicant's grades in applicable courses to the grades of a cohort of students in the same school who took the same courses, but who met or slightly exceeded the state standard on the high school WASL. If the applicant's grades are equal to or above the median grades of the comparison cohort, the applicant is deemed to have met the state standard. This method cannot be used if there are fewer than six students in the comparison cohort.

The SPI is also directed to develop an alternative assessment method that is an evaluation of a collection of work samples or collection of evidence. The SPI develops guidelines for the type and number of work samples, which can be collected from academic, career and technical, or remedial courses and can include performance tasks as well as written products. Uniform scoring criteria must be developed, and the collections must be scored at the state or regional level using a panel of trained educators.

For students in an SPI-approved career and technical program, the collection of work samples must be relevant to the particular program; focus on the application of academic knowledge within the program; include activities or projects that demonstrate academic knowledge; and represent the knowledge and skills that individuals in that field are expected to possess. An approved program is one that leads to a recognized certificate or credential and requires a sequenced progression of intensive and rigorous courses. The applicant must also attain the certificate associated with the program in order to meet the standard on the alternative assessment.

By June 1, 2006, the SPI must implement a process for students to appeal their WASL scores. By January 1, 2007, the SPI must also implement guidelines and appeals processes for

waiving CAA requirements for students who transfer to a public school in their junior or senior year or who have special unavoidable circumstances.

The SPI must begin development of an additional alternative assessment option for math that presents the math EALRs in segments; comparable in content and rigor when all segments are considered together; reliable and valid; and can be used to determine a student's performance level. The SPI is also directed to conduct a feasibility study regarding using existing mathematics assessments in languages other than English

By January 2007, the SPI must report in detail to the Education Committees of the Legislature on the following: (1) the guidelines, protocols, and procedures used by SPI in implementing the alternative assessments, particularly the collection of evidence; (2) a description the training provided for school districts and teachers involved with the alternative assessments; (3) an updated estimate of the likely number of students using or likely to be eligible to use the alternative assessments; (4) the results of the feasibility study regarding using existing math assessments in languages other than English; and (5) a status report on the development of an additional alternative assessment option that presents math in essential learning segments.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The minimum attendance and remediation requirement to access an alternative assessment is removed. In the cohort GPA comparison alternative, an applicant's score must be equal to or above the average of the cohort to meet the standard, not above the median. By January 2007, not September 2006, OSPI must report back to the Legislature, including the results of the feasibility study and the development of an alternative for math. SPI must begin development of an additional alternative assessment option for math that presents the math EALRs in segments; comparable in content and rigor when all segments are considered together; reliable and valid; and can be used to determine a student's performance level. The option to use the math portion of the PSAT, SAT, or ACT as an alternative assessment for demonstrating the math standard is removed. The removal of the highest score and scholar designation from the transcript is not included in the amended bill. The null and void clause is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 13, 2006.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: In this bill, for students to access alternative assessments, they must have a ninety-five percent attendance rate. Career and technical program students can access alternative assessments. For students who meet the statutory criteria, scores on the math portion of the PSAT, SAT, or the ACT may be used as an alternative assessment for demonstrating the math standard. There does need to be flexibility for career and technical program students. This bill adds the attendance and remediation requirement. OSPI needs to look at the PSAT, SAT, and ACT under the collection of evidence model. The issue of the median versus the mean is very important. OSPI wants the mean and not the median because it will be easier for high schools. Career and technical program students have a hard time sitting down to take a test sometimes, but they do well in practicing in the field. This bill is too restrictive in that it favors the WASL over other assessments. WEA favors local control

and wants school boards to set their own policies. The collection of evidence is a good method. Some students do not take tests well and this allows them to show their skills by other methods. The GPA cohort is a good option for students. The collection of evidence should be available for all students regardless of the size of the school. Reporting back to the Legislature is vital. Not sure if the attendance requirement and remediation should be a requirement. The PTA prefers the Senate version of the bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Rep. Quall, prime sponsor; Terry Burgeson, OSPI; Sue Longstreth, Bremerton SD; Marsha Fritz, Issaquah SD; Gary King, WEA; Jon Malmin, Gig harbor High School; Don Rash, AWSP; Mary Kinfield, PTA.