

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1050

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 22, 2007

Title: An act relating to allowing certain students with disabilities to participate in graduation ceremonies.

Brief Description: Allowing certain students with disabilities to participate in graduation ceremonies.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Uptegrove, Quall, Kagi, Pedersen, Morrell, Kenney, P. Sullivan, Jarrett, Simpson, Wallace, Cody, McDermott, Linville, Moeller, Morris, Springer, Wood, Santos, Schual-Berke, Williams, Ormsby and Hasegawa).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/08/07, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/21/07, 3/22/07 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Eide, Hewitt, Hobbs, Kauffman, Oemig, Rasmussen, Weinstein and Zarelli.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: The State Board of Education (SBE) determines the minimum state high school graduation requirements. School districts may adopt additional graduation requirements.

Students are assigned an expected graduation year based on the year they begin ninth grade. However, students receiving special education services are assigned an expected year of graduation when they turn age sixteen based on the students' Individualized Education Program (IEP). School districts must adopt written policies and procedures for meeting the unique needs of students receiving special education services. The procedures must allow special education students to remain in school until they graduate or reach age twenty-one. Thus, a student's IEP may provide for the student to continue in high school beyond a fourth year.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: By September 1, 2007, students receiving special education services who have IEPs providing for special education or related services beyond

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the fourth year of high school and who have attended four years of high school must be allowed to participate in commencement exercises with their graduating class.

A student's participation in commencement exercises must not affect the student's future ability to receive a high school diploma, a certificate of individual achievement, or a certificate of academic achievement.

The act may be known as Kevin's law.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Early Learning & K-12 Education): Beginning July 1, 2007, school districts must have policies and procedures that permit students receiving special education services under an IEP to participate in a graduation ceremony and receive a certificate of attendance. Participating in a graduation ceremony does not entitle a student to a high school diploma or a certificate of individual achievement.

The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Participating in a graduation ceremony is a highlight in a student's life. Parents and students are devastated to find out that if a student participates in a graduation ceremony he or she cannot continue to receive special education services. This bill provides a concrete advocacy tool.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Kevin and Howard Britt, Matthew and Janet Annal, citizens; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition.