
HOUSE BILL 2634

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2008 Regular Session

By Representatives Quall, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Kenney, Hudgins, and Santos

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1 AN ACT Relating to graduation requirements for certain English
2 language learner students; amending RCW 28A.655.0611; creating a new
3 section; and declaring an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds a particular
6 challenge for English language learner students who enter Washington
7 public schools at the middle and high school levels. More than eighty-
8 five percent of high school students in the transitional bilingual
9 program have language scores showing no or very limited English
10 proficiency. When the Washington assessment of student learning was
11 initiated in 1998, only seven percent of English language learner
12 students could meet the tenth grade standard. In 2007, thirty-eight
13 percent of tenth grade English language learner students met the
14 standard in reading and writing. This improvement indicates that
15 schools are making progress in providing these students with academic
16 instruction to meet the state's reading and writing standards.
17 However, it remains unrealistic to expect that sufficient numbers of
18 high school English language learner students will meet the state's
19 reading and writing standards over the next five years to warrant

1 imposing the same graduation requirement on them as for native English
2 speakers. The state's middle and high school teachers need additional
3 time to identify and implement additional instructional strategies that
4 enable older English language learners to acquire language skills
5 quickly.

6 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to acknowledge that high
7 school English language learner students enter school from a different
8 starting point academically than native English speakers. Until the
9 public schools have implemented strategies to make up the academic gap
10 for these students while they are in high school, different high school
11 graduation requirements should apply.

12 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.655.0611 and 2007 c 354 s 4 are each amended to
13 read as follows:

14 (1) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008 and through no
15 later than the graduating class of 2012, students may graduate from
16 high school without earning a certificate of academic achievement or a
17 certificate of individual achievement if they:

18 (a) Have not successfully met the mathematics standard on the high
19 school Washington assessment of student learning, an approved objective
20 alternative assessment, or an alternate assessment developed for
21 eligible special education students;

22 (b) Have successfully met the state standard in the other content
23 areas required for a certificate under RCW 28A.655.061 or 28A.155.045;

24 (c) Have met all other state and school district graduation
25 requirements; and

26 (d)(i) For the graduating class of 2008, successfully earn one
27 additional high school mathematics credit or career and technical
28 course equivalent, including courses offered at skill centers, after
29 the student's eleventh grade year intended to increase the student's
30 mathematics proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the mathematics
31 standards assessed on the high school Washington assessment of student
32 learning and continue to take the appropriate mathematics assessment at
33 least once annually until graduation; and

34 (ii) For the remaining graduating classes under this section,
35 successfully earn two additional mathematics credits or career and
36 technical course equivalent, including courses offered at skill
37 centers, after the student's tenth grade year intended to increase the

1 student's mathematics proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the
2 mathematics standards assessed on the high school Washington assessment
3 of student learning and continue to take the appropriate mathematics
4 assessment at least once annually until graduation.

5 (2) The state board of education may adopt a rule that ends the
6 application of subsection (1) of this section with a graduating class
7 before the graduating class of 2012, if the state board of education
8 adopts the rule by September 1st of the freshman school year of the
9 graduating class to which the provisions of this section no longer
10 apply. The state board of education's authority under this section
11 does not alter the requirement that any change in performance standards
12 for the tenth grade assessment must comply with RCW 28A.305.130.

13 (3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008 and through the
14 graduating class of 2012, English language learner students may
15 graduate from high school without earning a certificate of academic
16 achievement or a certificate of individual achievement if they:

17 (a) Have not achieved a sufficient score on the Washington language
18 proficiency test to exit the transitional bilingual program;

19 (b) Have not successfully met the reading or writing standard on
20 the high school Washington assessment of student learning, an approved
21 objective alternative assessment, or an alternate assessment developed
22 for eligible special education students;

23 (c) Have met all other state and school district graduation
24 requirements, including the requirements under subsection (1) of this
25 section if applicable; and

26 (d)(i) For the graduating class of 2009, successfully earn one
27 additional high school English language arts credit or career and
28 technical course equivalent, including courses offered at skill
29 centers, after the student's eleventh grade year intended to increase
30 the student's proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the reading and
31 writing standards assessed on the high school Washington assessment of
32 student learning and continue to take the appropriate assessment at
33 least once annually until graduation; and

34 (ii) For the graduating classes of 2010 through 2012, successfully
35 earn two additional English language arts credits or career and
36 technical course equivalent, including courses offered at skill
37 centers, after the student's tenth grade year intended to increase the
38 student's proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the reading and

1 writing standards assessed on the high school Washington assessment of
2 student learning and continue to take the appropriate assessment at
3 least once annually until graduation.

4 (4) This section expires August 31, 2013.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate
6 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
7 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect
8 immediately.

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