
SENATE BILL 6037

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2007 Regular Session

By Senators Hargrove, Pridemore and Rasmussen

Read first time 02/14/2007. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to eliminating the certificate of academic
2 achievement as a requirement for high school graduation; amending RCW
3 28A.655.061, 28A.155.045, and 28A.230.090; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that it is important
6 to recognize that students have multiple learning styles and that too
7 often a single, high stakes test does not accommodate all learning
8 styles. It is important to have high academic standards and the
9 Washington assessment of student learning can be an effective tool to
10 assist districts in achieving them. The Washington assessment of
11 student learning, however, may not adequately challenge our high
12 performing students and it takes valuable time and resources away from
13 essential learning for all students. Therefore, it is the intent of
14 the legislature to eliminate the use of the Washington assessment of
15 student learning as a graduation requirement.

16 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.655.061 and 2006 c 115 s 4 are each amended to
17 read as follows:

18 (1) The high school assessment system shall include but (~~need~~)

1 not be limited to the Washington assessment of student learning,
2 opportunities for a student to retake the content areas of the
3 assessment in which the student was not successful, and if approved by
4 the legislature pursuant to subsection (10) of this section, one or
5 more objective alternative assessments for a student to demonstrate
6 achievement of state academic standards. The objective alternative
7 assessments for each content area shall be comparable in rigor to the
8 skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the
9 Washington assessment of student learning for each content area.

10 (2) Subject to the conditions in this section, a certificate of
11 academic achievement (~~((shall be obtained by most students at about the
12 age of sixteen, and))~~) is evidence that the students have successfully
13 met the state standard in the content areas included in the
14 certificate. (~~((With the exception of students satisfying the
15 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, acquisition of the certificate is
16 required for graduation from a public high school but is not the only
17 requirement for graduation.))~~)

18 (3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, with the exception
19 of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, a student who
20 meets the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics
21 content areas of the high school Washington assessment of student
22 learning shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. If a
23 student does not successfully meet the state standards in one or more
24 content areas required for the certificate of academic achievement,
25 then the student may retake the assessment in the content area up to
26 four times at no cost to the student. If the student successfully
27 meets the state standards on a retake of the assessment then the
28 student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. Once
29 objective alternative assessments are authorized pursuant to subsection
30 (10) of this section, a student may use the objective alternative
31 assessments to demonstrate that the student successfully meets the
32 state standards for that content area if the student has retaken the
33 Washington assessment of student learning at least once. If the
34 student successfully meets the state standards on the objective
35 alternative assessments then the student shall earn a certificate of
36 academic achievement.

37 (4) Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, a student must
38 meet the state standards in science in addition to the other content

1 areas required under subsection (3) of this section on the Washington
2 assessment of student learning or the objective alternative assessments
3 in order to earn a certificate of academic achievement.

4 (5) The state board of education may not require the acquisition of
5 the certificate of academic achievement for students in home-based
6 instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, for students enrolled in private
7 schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or for students satisfying the
8 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045.

9 (6) A student may retain and use the highest result from each
10 successfully completed content area of the high school assessment.

11 (7) Beginning in 2006, school districts must make available to
12 students the following options:

13 (a) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
14 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the
15 state standards if the student is enrolled in a public school; or

16 (b) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to
17 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the
18 state standards if the student is enrolled in a high school completion
19 program at a community or technical college. The superintendent of
20 public instruction and the state board for community and technical
21 colleges shall jointly identify means by which students in these
22 programs can be assessed.

23 (8) Students who achieve the standard in a content area of the high
24 school assessment but who wish to improve their results shall pay for
25 retaking the assessment, using a uniform cost determined by the
26 superintendent of public instruction.

27 (9) Subject to available funding, the superintendent shall pilot
28 opportunities for retaking the high school assessment beginning in the
29 2004-05 school year. Beginning no later than September 2006,
30 opportunities to retake the assessment at least twice a year shall be
31 available to each school district.

32 (10)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction
33 shall develop options for implementing objective alternative
34 assessments, which may include an appeals process, for students to
35 demonstrate achievement of the state academic standards. The objective
36 alternative assessments shall be comparable in rigor to the skills and
37 knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the Washington
38 assessment of student learning and be objective in its determination of

1 student achievement of the state standards. Before any objective
2 alternative assessments in addition to those authorized in RCW
3 28A.655.065 or (b) of this subsection are used by a student to
4 demonstrate that the student has met the state standards in a content
5 area required to obtain a certificate, the legislature shall formally
6 approve the use of any objective alternative assessments through the
7 omnibus appropriations act or by statute or concurrent resolution.

8 (b) A student's score on the mathematics portion of the preliminary
9 scholastic assessment test (PSAT), the scholastic assessment test
10 (SAT), or the American college test (ACT) may be used as an objective
11 alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating that a
12 student has met or exceeded the mathematics standards for the
13 certificate of academic achievement. The state board of education
14 shall identify the scores students must achieve on the mathematics
15 portion of the PSAT, SAT, or ACT to meet or exceed the state standard
16 for mathematics. The state board of education shall identify the first
17 scores by December 1, 2006, and thereafter may increase but not
18 decrease the scores required for students to meet or exceed the state
19 standard for mathematics.

20 (11) By December 15, 2004, the house of representatives and senate
21 education committees shall obtain information and conclusions from
22 recognized, independent, national assessment experts regarding the
23 validity and reliability of the high school Washington assessment of
24 student learning for making individual student high school graduation
25 determinations.

26 (12) To help assure continued progress in academic achievement as
27 a foundation for high school graduation and to assure that students are
28 on track for high school graduation, each school district shall prepare
29 plans for students as provided in this subsection (12).

30 (a) Student learning plans are required for eighth through twelfth
31 grade students who were not successful on any or all of the content
32 areas of the Washington assessment for student learning during the
33 previous school year. The plan shall include the courses,
34 competencies, and other steps needed to be taken by the student to meet
35 state academic standards and stay on track for graduation. This
36 requirement shall be phased in as follows:

37 (i) Beginning no later than the 2004-05 school year ninth grade
38 students as described in this subsection (12)(a) shall have a plan.

1 (ii) Beginning no later than the 2005-06 school year and every year
2 thereafter eighth grade students as described in this subsection
3 (12)(a) shall have a plan.

4 (iii) The parent or guardian shall be notified, preferably through
5 a parent conference, of the student's results on the Washington
6 assessment of student learning, actions the school intends to take to
7 improve the student's skills in any content area in which the student
8 was unsuccessful, strategies to help them improve their student's
9 skills, and the content of the student's plan.

10 (iv) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the
11 student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the
12 plan made as necessary.

13 (b) Beginning with the 2005-06 school year and every year
14 thereafter, all fifth grade students who were not successful in one or
15 more of the content areas of the fourth grade Washington assessment of
16 student learning shall have a student learning plan.

17 (i) The parent or guardian of a student described in this
18 subsection (12)(b) shall be notified, preferably through a parent
19 conference, of the student's results on the Washington assessment of
20 student learning, actions the school intends to take to improve the
21 student's skills in any content area in which the student was
22 unsuccessful, and provide strategies to help them improve their
23 student's skills.

24 (ii) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the
25 student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the
26 plan made as necessary.

27 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.155.045 and 2004 c 19 s 104 are each amended to
28 read as follows:

29 Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students served under
30 this chapter, who are not appropriately assessed by the high school
31 Washington assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061, even with
32 accommodations, may earn a certificate of individual achievement. The
33 certificate may be earned using multiple ways to demonstrate skills and
34 abilities commensurate with their individual education programs. The
35 determination of whether the high school assessment system is
36 appropriate shall be made by the student's individual education program
37 team. (~~For these students, the certificate of individual achievement~~

1 ~~is required for graduation from a public high school, but need not be~~
2 ~~the only requirement for graduation.))~~ When measures other than the
3 high school assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used,
4 the measures shall be in agreement with the appropriate educational
5 opportunity provided for the student as required by this chapter. The
6 superintendent of public instruction shall develop the guidelines for
7 determining which students should not be required to participate in the
8 high school assessment system and which types of assessments are
9 appropriate to use.

10 When measures other than the high school assessment system as
11 defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used for high school graduation
12 purposes, the student's high school transcript shall note whether that
13 student has earned a certificate of individual achievement.

14 Nothing in this section shall be construed to deny a student the
15 right to participation in the high school assessment system as defined
16 in RCW 28A.655.061, and, upon successfully meeting the high school
17 standard, receipt of the certificate of academic achievement.

18 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.230.090 and 2006 c 114 s 3 are each amended to
19 read as follows:

20 (1) The state board of education shall establish high school
21 graduation requirements or equivalencies for students, except those
22 equivalencies established by local high schools or school districts
23 under RCW 28A.230.097.

24 (a) Any course in Washington state history and government used to
25 fulfill high school graduation requirements shall consider including
26 information on the culture, history, and government of the American
27 Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state.

28 (b) ~~((The certificate of academic achievement requirements under~~
29 ~~RCW 28A.655.061 or the certificate of individual achievement~~
30 ~~requirements under RCW 28A.155.045 are required for graduation from a~~
31 ~~public high school but are not the only requirements for graduation.~~

32 ~~(e))~~ Any decision on whether a student has met the state board's
33 high school graduation requirements for a high school and beyond plan
34 shall remain at the local level.

35 (2) In recognition of the statutory authority of the state board of
36 education to establish and enforce minimum high school graduation
37 requirements, the state board shall periodically reevaluate the

1 graduation requirements and shall report such findings to the
2 legislature in a timely manner as determined by the state board. The
3 state board shall reevaluate the graduation requirements for students
4 enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous career and technical
5 education programs, particularly those programs that lead to a
6 certificate or credential that is state or nationally recognized. The
7 purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students enrolled in these
8 programs have sufficient opportunity to earn a certificate of academic
9 achievement, complete the program and earn the program's certificate or
10 credential, and complete other state and local graduation requirements.
11 The board shall (~~reports~~—[~~report~~]) report its findings and
12 recommendations for additional flexibility in graduation requirements,
13 if necessary, to the legislature by December 1, 2007.

14 (3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other
15 than English established by the state board of education or a local
16 school district, or both, for purposes of high school graduation,
17 students who receive instruction in American sign language or one or
18 more American Indian languages shall be considered to have satisfied
19 the state or local school district graduation requirement for
20 instruction in one or more languages other than English.

21 (4) If requested by the student and his or her family, a student
22 who has completed high school courses before attending high school
23 shall be given high school credit which shall be applied to fulfilling
24 high school graduation requirements if:

25 (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic
26 level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth
27 grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing
28 the same course requirements and examinations as the high school
29 students enrolled in the class; or

30 (b) The academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for
31 seventh and eighth grade classes and the course would qualify for high
32 school credit, because the course is similar or equivalent to a course
33 offered at a high school in the district as determined by the school
34 district board of directors.

35 (5) Students who have taken and successfully completed high school
36 courses under the circumstances in subsection (4) of this section shall
37 not be required to take an additional competency examination or perform
38 any other additional assignment to receive credit.

1 (6) At the college or university level, five quarter or three
2 semester hours equals one high school credit.

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