

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1562

As Passed House:

March 3, 2009

Title: An act relating to graduation without a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement.

Brief Description: Changing the requirements for graduating without a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement.

Sponsors: Representatives Lias, Priest, Quall, Sullivan, Kenney, Simpson, McCune and Ormsby; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/4/09, 2/6/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 3/3/09, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the requirement that high school students must continue to take the mathematics Washington Assessment of Student Learning, or another appropriate assessment, each year in order to qualify for a temporary exception that allows graduation without a Certificate of Academic Achievement.
- Removes the expectation that mathematics courses these students are required to take be considered "additional" courses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cox, Dammeier, Hunt, Johnson, Lias, Maxwell, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383)

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Starting with the class of 2008, high school students are required to meet the state standard on the 10th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) or an approved alternative assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics to receive a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). Students in special education who are not appropriately assessed using the WASL can earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). The CAA or CIA were to be required for high school graduation starting with the class of 2008, but the 2007 Legislature enacted a temporary exception for students who do not meet the state standard in mathematics.

Through the graduating class of 2012, students may graduate from high school without a CAA or CIA if they:

1. have not met the state standard in mathematics on the WASL, an approved alternative assessment, or an alternative for eligible special education students;
2. have met the state standard in the other required content areas;
3. have met all other state and local graduation requirements;
4. continue to take the appropriate mathematics assessment annually; and
5. successfully earn two additional high school mathematics credits or a career and technical course equivalent after their sophomore year, designed to increase their proficiency on the WASL. This requirement was one additional credit after their junior year for students in the class of 2008.

Summary of Bill:

The conditions for students through the graduating class of 2012 to be eligible for high school graduation without earning a Certificate of Academic Achievement or Certificate of Individual Achievement are revised. Students are no longer required to continue taking the appropriate mathematics assessment annually until graduation. Students are still required to take two mathematics credits after their sophomore year (one credit after their junior year for the class of 2008), but these credits are no longer required to be "additional" credits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Students are taking additional math classes to improve their skills, but the requirement to keep taking the test needs to be suspended. All it would take for compliance would be for them to sit down and fill out one bubble. This is a mere technicality. Students should not be the victims of a lack of communication and clarity about the requirement. There are hundreds of students who have completed everything else but for whatever reason did not take the math WASL again as juniors. Now they will have to take the test and pass if they hope to graduate. One student has already joined the military and is getting ready to leave. The student body president of one high school has applied for college and could potentially lose out on admission and financial aid. A great deal of time is being spent by graduation counselors in each high school tracking the behavior of these students to make

sure they comply with each item. This bookkeeping activity is taking them away from providing real assistance for students. This is a requirement that is difficult to follow because it doesn't have a point. The emergency clause should stay on the bill to provide clarity and reassurance for students about whether they will be graduating. It's important to have more clarity about the purpose of these graduation requirements.

(Oppose) None.

Persons Testifying: Rep. Liias, prime sponsor; Alan Burke, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Dennis Milliken, Northshore School District; Bob Silverman, Scott Brittain, Kim Armstrong, and Carl Spencer, Puyallup School District; Nancy Steers, Seattle Public Schools; Nancy Katims, Edmonds School District; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; and Juanita Doyon, Parent Empowerment Network.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (In support) Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.