

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 1410

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding science end-of-course assessments.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Santos, Dammeier, Probst and Lias; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

House Committee on Education

Background:

Since the graduating class of 2008, students have been required to meet the state standard on the statewide high school assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). Students in special education who are not appropriately tested by the regular assessment may earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). Earning the CAA or CIA in reading and writing is a requirement for graduation. There has been a temporary exemption through the class of 2012 where students may graduate without a CAA or CIA as a result of not meeting the state standard in mathematics by taking additional mathematics courses. Beginning with the graduating class of 2013, students will be required to meet the state standard on the high school assessments in reading, writing, mathematics, and science both to earn a CAA and for graduation.

For purposes of graduation, the Legislature has authorized alternative assessments for students who do not meet the standard on state assessments. For example, students may substitute a score of three on specified Advanced Placement (AP) exams covering English, language arts, and mathematics. None of the AP exams currently authorized are in science.

The high school science assessment is a comprehensive assessment. A budget proviso in the 2010 Supplemental Omnibus Appropriations Act directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop an end-of-course assessment (EOC) for high school science in Biology, to be implemented in the 2011-12 school year. The proviso also required the SPI to recommend whether additional science EOCs should be developed and to recommend an implementation schedule. Washington's science learning standards were revised in 2009 and include content in life, physical, and earth and space sciences. The standards also include the study of systems, inquiry, and application that cuts across content areas.

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.

In a report submitted in December 2010, the SPI recommends development of two additional EOCs in Physical Science and Integrated Science. The SPI recommends that, for purposes of high school graduation, students be required to meet the state standard on one of the science EOCs. The report also recommends delaying the implementation of the graduation requirement in science to the class of 2017.

A number of science education groups, led by Achieve, Incorporated, are working to develop a set of common science learning standards that multiple states could adopt. The framework for the standards is being prepared by the National Academy of Sciences and is scheduled to be released in the late spring of 2011. Standards are expected to be available for states to review by spring of 2012. If the SPI proposes changes to state learning standards or assessments, the education committees of the Legislature must, on request, be provided an opportunity to review the proposed changes before they are adopted.

Summary:

Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, rather than the class of 2013, students must meet the state standard in science on the state assessment, or on an alternate assessment for students in special education, to earn a CAA or CIA for graduation.

Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, the state high school science assessment is a Biology EOC. The SPI may develop additional science EOCs for purposes of graduation when directed by the Legislature. The SPI is also authorized to participate with consortia of multiple states as common science standards and assessments are developed, and may adapt the state high school science assessment accordingly, as long as the legislative education committees have an opportunity to review any proposed modifications to the standards and assessments before they are adopted.

Various AP science exams are added to the list of approved alternatives for students who take the regular state assessment at least once. Scores on the ACT in science and on SAT science subtests may also be used as an alternative once the State Board of Education has sufficient data to identify equivalent scores.

Votes on Final Passage:

First Special Session

House	86	10
Senate	41	3

Effective: August 24, 2011