
Education Committee

E2SSB 6552

Brief Description: Improving student success by modifying instructional hour and graduation requirements.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Dammeier, Litzow, Rivers, Tom, Fain, Hill, Kohl-Welles, Mullet, McAuliffe and Cleveland).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop curriculum frameworks for a selected list of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses whose content is considered equivalent to science or mathematics courses that meet high school graduation requirements.
- Requires school districts to grant academic credit in science or mathematics for CTE courses on the list beginning in the 2015-16 school year, if the course is offered.
- Changes a required increase in Basic Education instructional hours to 1,000 hours for grades 1 through 8 and 1,080 hours for grades 9 through 12, and permits school districts to calculate the hours using a district-wide average across all grades.
- Requires the increased hours to be implemented in the 2015-16 school year.
- Allows hours scheduled for noninstructional purposes at the end of the school year for graduating seniors as authorized under current law to be counted as instructional hours.
- Directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules implementing its revised proposed 24-credit graduation requirement framework, to take effect with the graduating class of 2019.
- Specifies enhancements in the prototypical school funding formula for high schools to support reduced laboratory science class size; additional guidance counselors; and increased materials, supplies, and operating costs.

Hearing Date: 2/24/14

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

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.

Background:

Career and Technical Course Equivalencies.

Under current law, school districts are directed to examine their credit-granting policies and award academic credit for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that they determine to be equivalent to an academic course. If a student is granted equivalency credit, the student's transcript reflects the academic course number and description. All decisions about granting equivalency credit are made by local school districts.

In 2011 the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a "two-for-one" policy that allows a student to satisfy two graduation requirements with a single CTE equivalent course, thereby freeing up room in the student's schedule for other courses. The current requirement for the graduating class of 2016 is three mathematics credits and two science credits, one of which must be a laboratory science. The SBE has proposed requiring an additional laboratory science credit.

Instructional Hours.

Legislation enacted in 2009 (ESHB 2261) requires school districts to increase minimum annual instructional hours under Basic Education from a district-wide average of 1,000 hours, to 1,000 hours in each of grades 1 through 6 and 1,080 hours in each of grades 7 through 12. The increase in instructional hours is to be implemented according to a schedule adopted by the Legislature. The 2013-2015 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Act) directs school districts to implement the increase beginning in the 2014-15 school year.

School districts may schedule the last five days of the school year for noninstructional purposes for graduating seniors, but may still claim those students as full-time equivalent (FTE) students for funding purposes. The SBE has recently created a "frequently-asked questions" document indicating that any noninstructional time during the last five days of the school year for graduating seniors may not count toward the minimum annual hours of instruction required.

Graduation Requirements.

The SBE establishes minimum requirements for high school graduation through administrative rules. The current requirements are 20 credits among a specified distribution of subjects, a culminating project, and a High School and Beyond Plan. Under ESHB 2261, school districts, as part of their Basic Education program, must provide students with the opportunity to complete 24 credits for graduation, based on courses specified by the SBE. The increase to 24 credits is to be phased-in according to a schedule adopted by the Legislature.

In November 2010 the SBE proposed a Career and College Ready framework for the 24 credits, and a year later adopted those changes that were found not to have a fiscal impact. In January 2014 the SBE modified its proposal slightly, but must wait for legislative authorization before adopting the remaining components. One aspect of the SBE's proposal is to allow school districts to waive up to two of the credits if students need to retake courses to fulfill the required subject areas.

Prototypical School Funding Formula

State funding for the Instructional Program of Basic Education is allocated through a funding formula based on assumed class size and the administrative, instructional, and classified staff needed for a prototypical elementary, middle, or high school of a particular size. There are also

assumptions about materials, supplies, and operating costs (MSOC); district-wide support; central administration; and special programs. Some details of the formula are specified in statute. The Act may contain additional details or enhancements. For example, the formula allows for a special class size for laboratory science courses to be established in the Act, but no such class size is currently specified.

The 2013-2015 Act establishes a new funding allocation beginning in the 2014-15 school year based on 2.2222 hours of additional instruction per week for students in grades 7 through 12. The Act states that this enhancement, which costs approximately \$97 million for state fiscal year 2015, is to support the required increase in Basic Education instructional hours. The Act also includes an allocation for guidance counselors of 2.009 FTE staff per prototypical high school beginning in 2013-14, compared to the statutory allocation of 1.909 FTE staff.

Summary of Bill:

Career and Technical Course Equivalencies.

The OSPI, in consultation with one or more technical working groups, is directed to develop curriculum frameworks for a selected list of CTE courses whose content in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is considered equivalent, in full or in part, to science or mathematics courses that meet high school graduation requirements. The course content must be aligned with industry standards and with the adopted state learning standards in mathematics and science. The OSPI must submit the course list and curriculum frameworks to the SBE for review, public comment, and approval before the 2015-16 school year. The list may be periodically updated thereafter.

Beginning no later than the 2015-16 school year, school districts are required to grant academic credit in science or mathematics for CTE courses on the OSPI list if the course is offered, but are not limited to the courses on the list.

Instructional Hours.

The increase in Basic Education instructional hours is changed to 1,000 hours for students in grades 1 through 8 and 1,080 hours for students in grades 9 through 12. School districts may calculate the hours as a district-wide average across all grades, rather than being required to provide the hours in each grade. The increase takes effect in the 2015-16 school year.

Hours scheduled for noninstructional purposes during the last five days of the school year for graduating seniors count toward minimum Basic Education instructional hours.

Graduation Requirements.

The SBE is directed to adopt rules implementing the Career and College Ready graduation framework adopted by resolution on November 10, 2010, and revised on January 9, 2014, to take effect with the graduating class of 2019, including authorization for a school district to waive up to two credits on an individual student basis in accordance with the SBE rules.

Prototypical School Funding Formula

Legislative intent is stated to shift the focus of investments from compliance with increased instructional hours to assisting school districts with providing an opportunity for students to earn 24 credits for high school graduation.

A class size allocation is added to the prototypical school formula for two laboratory science classes for students in grades 9 through 12, beginning in the 2014-15 school year. The class size is 19.98, and the method for calculating the allocation is specified.

The staffing allocation for guidance counselors in a prototypical high school is increased from 1.909 to 2.539 FTE staff.

A new supplemental allocation of the MSOC is established beginning in 2014-15, based on the following amounts per FTE student in grades 9 through 12:

- Technology: \$36.35
- Curriculum and textbooks: \$39.02
- Supplies and library materials: \$82.84
- Professional development: \$ 6.04

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.