
Education Committee

HB 2734

Brief Description: Changing high school science assessment requirements.

Sponsors: Representative McCaslin.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the requirement that students meet standard on the statewide high school science assessment in order to earn the Certificate of Academic Achievement that is required for graduation from a public high school.
- Eliminates a provision requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to implement a two-year transition period for transferring from Biology end-of-course assessment currently used as the statewide high school science assessment to a more comprehensive science assessment adopted by the SPI.

Hearing Date: 1/26/16

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), is authorized to maintain and revise a statewide academic assessment system to measure student knowledge and skills on state learning standards and for purposes of state and federal accountability. The statewide assessment system must cover the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science for elementary, middle, and high school years. The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires states to assess students based on state learning standards in reading and mathematics in each of grades 3 through 8 and one high school grade, as well as in at least one grade in elementary, middle, and high school in science.

Students who successfully meet standards on required statewide assessments earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). The earning of a CAA or a Certificate of Individual

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Achievement, a certificate that may be awarded to students requiring special education who are not appropriately assessed by the statewide assessment system, is one of the requirements for graduation from a Washington public high school.

In 2013 the SPI was directed to, beginning with the 2014-15 school year, implement student assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics that were developed with a multistate consortium. (Washington is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, known as the SBAC.) Full integration of the SBAC assessments will occur for the class of 2019, as beginning with that class, the 11th grade SBAC assessments will be the exclusive high school assessments for ELA and mathematics. During the multi-year transition period, however, the SPI was directed to develop and administer a 10th grade ELA assessment and algebra and geometry-based end-of-course (EOC) assessments using test items and other resources from the SBAC assessments.

Legislation adopted in 2011 directed that high school science be assessed statewide using a Biology EOC assessment. Subsequently, the Legislature expressed intent to implement a two-year transition from a Biology EOC to a comprehensive science assessment. The SPI has limited authority with regard to developing and adopting a science assessment, as a new science EOC or comprehensive science assessment may only be developed and adopted when specifically directed by the Legislature. In accordance with legislation adopted in 2015 (*i.e.*, SB 6145, enacted as chapter 42, Laws of 2015, 3rd sp. sess.), attaining a passing score on the Biology EOC assessment is not required for graduation for the class of 2016, but passing the assessment is a graduation requirement for subsequent classes.

The SBE is responsible for establishing the performance scores that students must meet on state assessments or statutorily authorized alternative assessments to obtain a CAA. In accordance with statutory requirements, the SBE has established performance scores for the assessments used during the transition period, as well as for the SBAC assessments.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that students meet standard on the statewide high school science assessment in order to earn the CAA that is required for graduation from a public high school is eliminated. The discontinuation of this requirement applies to class of 2017 onward.

The statewide high school assessment in science continues to be the Biology EOC assessment. Provisions indicating that the Legislature intends to transition from a Biology EOC assessment to a more comprehensive science assessment are retained, but a provision requiring the SPI to implement a two-year transition period after it adopts a more comprehensive science assessment is removed.

Various statutory references to the "Washington Assessment of Student Learning," a statewide assessment that was discontinued in 2009, are changed to "statewide student assessment."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/21/16.

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