

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1162

As of March 17, 2021

Title: An act relating to creating new graduation credit and pathway options.

Brief Description: Concerning high school graduation credit and pathway options.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Stonier, Harris, Lekanoff, Hackney, Pollet, Dolan and Callan; by request of State Board of Education).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/25/21, 72-26.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/17/21.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Reduces the number of credits required for graduation from 24 to 20 for the class of 2021, and subsequent classes.
- Establishes an additional graduation pathway enabling students to complete a performance exhibition meeting specified criteria.
- Modifies credit waiver provisions by limiting the two-credit individual student waiver to students in the graduating classes of 2019 and 2020.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: High School Graduation Requirements. Washington State students must meet various requirements to graduate high school and receive a diploma. Students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas as determined by the State Board of Education (SBE). Students must also complete a High School and Beyond Plan and satisfy any local requirements. Graduating students in the class of 2021 and subsequent classes must earn 17 core academic credits, four elective credits, and three locally determined personalized

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

pathway credits.

Students must meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway to receive their high school diploma. These include:

- meeting or exceeding a set standard on statewide English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments;
- completing and qualifying for college credit in dual credit courses in ELA and mathematics;
- earning high school credit in a high school transition course in ELA and mathematics;
- earning high school credit with a C+ grade or receiving particular scores in AP, international baccalaureate, or Cambridge international courses;
- meeting or exceeding set scores on the SAT or ACT;
- meeting standards in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery; or
- completing a sequence of career and technical education (CTE) courses.

Rules adopted by the SBE to implement the career and college-ready graduation requirements must include authorizations for school districts to waive up to two credits for individual students based on the student's circumstances, provided none of the waived credits are identified as mandatory by the SBE. The waivers must be issued by school districts in accordance with written policies adopted by the applicable school district board of directors.

Students requiring special education may qualify for graduation by meeting applicable requirements and earning a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). The requirement that qualifying students earn a CIA as a prerequisite to graduation is discontinued after the graduating class of 2021.

Summary of Bill: High School Graduation Requirements. Beginning with the graduating class of 2021, graduating students must earn at least 20 credits, including both the mandatory core subject credits and the personalized pathway requirements as defined by the SBE. School districts must continue to provide students the opportunity to complete 24 credits.

Provisions that allow school districts to waive up to two credits for individual students based on the student's circumstances are modified and apply only to students in the graduating classes of 2019 and 2020. The limitations of school districts to issue waivers to individual students through the provisions do not apply in circumstances where a district is granted flexibility from state requirements under an emergency waiver program established in EHB 1121.

Graduation Pathways. An additional graduation pathway option is established. School districts may offer students the opportunity to meet graduation pathway options by completing a performance exhibition that includes authentic evidence demonstrating industry or profession specific knowledge and skills in two or more subject areas, and

opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in other state learning standards.

Prior to offering the graduation pathway to students, the board of directors of the school district must adopt a written policy in conformity with applicable state requirements that describes the school district's processes for approving student requests to use the graduation pathway, and evaluating student performance exhibitions.

The SBE, prior to adopting rules to implement the performance exhibition pathway, must consult with states, schools in Washington and in other states, or both, that have successfully implemented exhibition or performance-based options students may use to demonstrate knowledge and skills. The consultations must address, among other topics determined by the SBE, criteria that is or may be employed when constituting panels to evaluate student performance exhibitions.

School districts are directed to determine if there is disproportionality among specific student subgroups participating in and completing each graduation pathway option offered by the school district. If disproportionality is found, school districts must take appropriate corrective actions to ensure the pathway options are equitable.

Other Graduation-Related Duties of the State Board of Education. Provisions mandating the SBE to reevaluate the graduation requirements for students enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous CTE programs are modified. The SBE is directed to reevaluate the graduation requirements for students enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous CTE programs, particularly those programs that lead to a high school diploma, instead of those that lead to a certificate or a state or nationally recognized credential.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The graduation pathway created under this bill helps to treat a student as an individual in the graduation process. This pathway allows an individual student to apply proficiencies in mathematics and ELA to something they are passionate about and that could benefit their community. The performance exhibition allows students to simultaneously display proficiency in state learning standards and aligns with post-graduation interests. This proposal balances district requirements with state ones in order to ensure students are prepared for what comes next. Every student deserves equity in their graduation requirements. A 20-credit requirement gives certain students more hope and motivation for graduating high school and advancing to higher education. The portfolio would be a meaningful and culturally appropriate step. An exhibition

pathway honor student interests. This bill takes another positive step in creating a business-education partnership in education requirements. The student communities that would use this pathway are not shying away from a rigorous high school education. The passing of this bill will help Washington take steps to ensure that students thrive in their own environments.

CON: Graduation pathways were recently instituted. Evidence does not exist that the pathways need to be changed. We should work to improve pathways based on data. The bill does not create a state standard for a performance exhibition pathway. Counselors cannot keep up with frequent changes to graduation requirements.

OTHER: The performance exhibition does not meet the stated requirements of the pathways. Current pathways are not totally reliant on assessment results.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Monica Jurado Stonier, Prime Sponsor; Michelle Nims, Washington State PTA; Randy Spaulding, State Board of Education; Ashley Lin, Student, Evergreen School District; Jenny Rodriguez, Pasco School District; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Benjamin Small, Central Valley School District #356; Sui-Lan Hookano, Cultural Program Director Enumclaw School District; Dr. Wade Larson, Wagstaff, Inc.; Brisa Hernandez, Washington State School Directors' Association.

CON: Dave Mastin, Association of Washington Business; Virginia Barry, Stand for Children; Tim Knue, Washington Association for Career and Technical Education; Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable; Steve Smith, Black Education Strategy Roundtable.

OTHER: Katherine Mahoney, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.