

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5734

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As of January 19, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to student physical education and health requirements.

**Brief Description:** Addressing student physical education and health requirements.

**Sponsors:** Senators Dhingra, Lovick, Nobles, Wellman and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/19/22.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires high schools to emphasize the work of health in addition to physical education.
- Requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules establishing that, beginning with the class of 2026, the statewide minimum graduation requirements include one credit of physical education and one credit of health.

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### 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 in order 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;
- complete a High School and Beyond Plan;
- meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway; and
- satisfy any local requirements.

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*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.*

Of the 24 credits, 17 credits are considered foundational. Students must earn at least two health and fitness credits—0.5 credits of health and 1.5 credits of physical education.

Physical Education. All high schools of the state are required to emphasize the work of physical education, and carry into effect all physical education requirements established by rule of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Individual students are allowed to be excused from participating in physical education for a variety of reasons, including physical disability, employment, participation in directed athletics, and others.

**Summary of Bill:** In addition to emphasizing the work of physical education, all high schools of the state shall emphasize the work of health and carry into effect all health requirements established by rule of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The State Board of Education must adopt rules establishing that, beginning with the class of 2026, the statewide minimum credit requirements for high school graduation include one credit of physical education and one credit of health. The adopted rules shall not increase the overall number of credits required for graduation.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 12, 2022.

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

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill was brought forward by current high school students. There is a mental health emergency in schools, and students are asking for greater health education, specifically around mental health. Large amounts of students have reported mental health concerns. Washington needs to be more proactive about providing students the tools to handle these challenges. This bill would allow more time to be devoted to issues of health.

OTHER: It is good that the bill does not add additional credit requirements for students, but physical education is important for students and should not be reduced.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Manka Dhingra, Prime Sponsor; Eleanor Christofferson, Lake Washington High School; Alex Hartnett; Melanie Smith, Committee for Children.

OTHER: Anna Hernandez-French, OSPI; Jared Mason-Gere, Washington Education

Association; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals.

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