CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

SENATE BILL 5498

67th Legislature
2022 Regular Session

Passed by the Senate March 7, 2022
Yeas 49  Nays 0

President of the Senate

Passed by the House March 4, 2022
Yeas 97  Nays 1

CERTIFICATE

I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is SENATE BILL 5498 as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

Secretary

Approved

Speaker of the House of Representatives

FILED

Secretary of State

State of Washington

Governor of the State of Washington
AN ACT Relating to posthumous high school diplomas; amending RCW 28A.230.120; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature affirms its statutory assertion that the purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner.

(2) The legislature finds that, on rare occasions and due to unforeseen circumstances, school districts may wish to provide recognition of a student's status of being on-track to graduate, which is interrupted by an untimely passing that prevents the completion of the secondary education program. In these limited instances, school districts should have discretion to issue a posthumous high school diploma with an "honoris causa" inscription.

(3) The legislature recognizes that the authority to issue a high school diploma properly rests with the local school district and its determination of whether a student has met the applicable state and local graduation requirements. The legislature finds, however, that establishing uniform requirements governing the issuance of
posthumous diplomas by school districts will promote the proper and effective administration of the public education system.

(4) The legislature, therefore, intends to authorize school districts to issue posthumous high school diplomas for qualifying students and in accordance with delineated requirements that promote local discretion, consistent administration, and the acknowledgment of academic achievements that were prematurely interrupted by the student's untimely passing.

Sec. 2. RCW 28A.230.120 and 2008 c 185 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) School districts shall issue diplomas to students signifying graduation from high school upon the students' satisfactory completion of all local and state graduation requirements. Districts shall grant students the option of receiving a final transcript in addition to the regular diploma.

(2) School districts or schools of attendance shall establish policies and procedures to notify senior students of the transcript option and shall direct students to indicate their decisions in a timely manner. School districts shall make appropriate provisions to assure that students who choose to receive a copy of their final transcript shall receive such transcript after graduation.

(3)(a) A school district may issue a high school diploma to a person who:

(i) Is an honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the United States; and

(ii) Left high school before graduation to serve in World War II, the Korean conflict, or the Vietnam era as defined in RCW 41.04.005.

(b) A school district may issue a diploma to or on behalf of a person otherwise eligible under (a) of this subsection notwithstanding the fact that the person holds a high school equivalency certification or is deceased.

(c) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt a form for a diploma application to be used by a veteran or a person acting on behalf of a deceased veteran under this subsection (3). The superintendent of public instruction shall specify what constitutes acceptable evidence of eligibility for a diploma.

(4)(a) A school district, at the request of the parent, guardian, or custodian, may issue a posthumous high school diploma for a deceased student if the student:
(i) Was enrolled in a public school of the district at the time of death;

(ii) Was deemed on-track for graduation before the time of death;

and

(iii) Died after matriculating into high school.

(b) A high school diploma issued under this subsection (4) must bear the inscription "honoris causa" and may not be issued before the graduation date of the class in which the student was enrolled.

(c) Nothing in this subsection (4):

(i) Obligates school districts to award a diploma for a deceased student at the same ceremony or event as other graduating students;

or

(ii) Limits the retroactive issuance of a high school diploma.

(d) Diplomas issued under this subsection (4) may not be applied toward student graduation counts or for any other purpose of federal and state accountability data collection.

NEW SECTION.  Sec. 3. This act may be known and cited as Evitan's law.

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