
SENATE BILL 5189

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Wellman, Dhingra, Harris, Nobles, C. Wilson, Kauffman, Hasegawa, and Saldaña

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1 AN ACT Relating to supporting the implementation of competency-
2 based education; amending RCW 28A.230.125; adding a new chapter to
3 Title 28A RCW; and repealing RCW 28A.300.810.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The definitions in this section apply
6 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
7 otherwise.

8 (1) "Competencies" mean the rigorous, shared expectations for
9 learning that encompass knowledge, skills, and abilities across grade
10 levels. Competencies are broader than learning standards and may
11 encompass multiple learning standards. Competencies are transparent,
12 measurable, relevant, and transferable to multiple contexts.

13 (2)(a) "Competency-based education" means education that includes
14 the following elements:

15 (i) Students are empowered daily to make important decisions
16 about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply
17 knowledge, and how they will demonstrate their learning;

18 (ii) Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering
19 learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and
20 actionable evidence;

1 (iii) Students receive timely, differentiated support based on
2 their individual learning needs;

3 (iv) Students progress based on evidence of mastery, not seat
4 time;

5 (v) Students learn actively using different pathways and varied
6 pacing;

7 (vi) Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in
8 the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education
9 systems; and

10 (vii) Rigorous, common expectations for learning, including
11 knowledge, skills, and dispositions, are explicit, transparent,
12 measurable, and transferable.

13 (b) "Mastery-based learning" has the same meaning as "competency-
14 based education."

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) By September 1, 2025, the office of
16 the superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules to
17 authorize full-time enrollment funding for students enrolled in
18 competency-based education programs identified by the state board of
19 education based on:

20 (a) School membership in the mastery-based learning collaborative
21 established in section 502(2), chapter 334, Laws of 2021 or the
22 school having a current waiver from credit-based graduation
23 requirements granted by the state board of education under RCW
24 28A.300.750; or

25 (b) The process developed by the state board of education under
26 section 3 of this act.

27 (2) Rules adopted pursuant to this section must permit school
28 districts to report full-time equivalent students in eligible
29 competency-based education programs for general apportionment
30 funding.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The state board of education shall
32 design and recommend a process to identify and designate schools and
33 school districts that are implementing competency-based education and
34 identify costs associated with this process. This process must
35 consider the extent to which competency-based education is being
36 implemented as compared to the seven elements of the definition in
37 section 1 of this act. The office of the superintendent of public
38 instruction shall consult with the state board of education on how

1 this designation can be displayed on the Washington state report card
2 website.

3 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
4 consultation with the state board of education, shall develop and
5 recommend a process for the office of the superintendent of public
6 instruction to create competencies aligned with the state learning
7 standards and identify costs associated with this process. This
8 process must incorporate relevant materials and guidance developed
9 through the mastery-based learning collaborative established in
10 section 502(2), chapter 334, Laws of 2021. The office of the
11 superintendent of public instruction shall submit the recommendations
12 and associated costs developed in accordance with this subsection to
13 the state board of education by December 1, 2025.

14 (3) The state board of education shall include the
15 recommendations and associated costs developed in accordance with
16 this section in the report required by section 502(2), chapter 475,
17 Laws of 2023 that is due December 31, 2025.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The Washington interscholastic activities
19 association shall include in its rule adoption process a review of
20 whether the rule would create any potential barriers related to
21 students participating in competency-based education in order to
22 ensure continued equitable access to interscholastic activities for
23 those students.

24 **Sec. 5.** RCW 28A.230.125 and 2024 c 202 s 5 are each amended to
25 read as follows:

26 (1) ~~((The))~~ (a) Before the 2026-27 school year, the
27 superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the four-
28 year institutions as defined in RCW 28B.76.020, the state board for
29 community and technical colleges, the state board of education, and
30 the workforce training and education coordinating board, shall
31 develop and update for use by all public school districts a
32 standardized high school transcript. The superintendent shall
33 establish clear definitions for the terms "credits" and "hours" so
34 that school programs operating on the quarter, semester, or trimester
35 system can be compared.

36 ~~((+2))~~ (b) The standardized high school transcript must include
37 a notation of whether the student has earned the Washington state
38 seal of biliteracy established under RCW 28A.300.575.

1 (2) Before the 2026-27 school year, the state board of education,
2 in consultation with the four-year institutions as defined in RCW
3 28B.76.020, the state board for community and technical colleges, the
4 office of the superintendent of public instruction, the Washington
5 student achievement council, and the workforce training and education
6 coordinating board, shall develop or identify and recommend to the
7 office of the superintendent of public instruction a format for a
8 competency-based education high school transcript that can be used by
9 all public school districts as part of, or as an alternative to, the
10 standardized high school transcript developed under subsection (1) of
11 this section.

12 (3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must
13 inform public school districts of updates to the transcripts
14 developed under this section.

15 (4) For the purposes of this section, "competency-based
16 education" has the same meaning as in section 1 of this act.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act
18 constitute a new chapter in Title 28A RCW.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** RCW 28A.300.810 (Innovative learning pilot
20 program) and 2020 c 353 s 2 are each repealed.

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