
HOUSE BILL 2797

State of Washington 62nd Legislature 2012 Regular Session

By Representatives Van De Wege, McCoy, and Santos

Read first time 02/23/12. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to the statewide high school assessment in science;
2 amending RCW 28A.655.061 and 28A.655.068; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** In section 1, chapter 22, Laws of 2011 1st
5 sp. sess., the legislature stated that it "does not wish to narrow the
6 high school science curriculum to a singular focus on biology." The
7 legislature finds that the unusual reality of only one science end-of-
8 course test, namely in biology, required for graduation for the class
9 of 2015 does narrow the focus and creates an unintended consequence
10 that runs counter to other educational goals of the state of
11 Washington.

12 The high stakes graduation requirement for biology has resulted in
13 some schools letting go physics instructors in favor of biology
14 instructors. The artificial emphasis on biology caused by the
15 graduation requirement also prevents teachers from spending time
16 teaching nonbiology science subjects that are known to be necessary for
17 students in today's world. Science teachers are experiencing the
18 pressure from the high stakes nature of the one biology test, which

1 creates an overwhelming concentration of staff, time, and resources
2 into that one subject to the exclusion of physical, earth, and space
3 sciences, and engineering.

4 The legislature is also aware that next generation science
5 standards developed from the framework for science education will be
6 released for adoption in the fall of 2012 and that this could make
7 necessary further revisiting of the entire assessment process for
8 science in this state.

9 The legislature therefore intends to set aside the biology
10 end-of-course exam as a graduation requirement until such time as the
11 state has the funding and resources to develop and implement a second
12 science end-of-course or integrated science exam or until the decision
13 is made about how to assess the next generation science standards,
14 which are being released for consideration for adoption in the fall of
15 2012.

16 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.655.061 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 22 s 2 are each
17 amended to read as follows:

18 (1) The high school assessment system shall include but need not be
19 limited to the statewide student assessment, opportunities for a
20 student to retake the content areas of the assessment in which the
21 student was not successful, and, if approved by the legislature
22 pursuant to subsection (~~((10))~~) (9) of this section, one or more
23 objective alternative assessments for a student to demonstrate
24 achievement of state academic standards. The objective alternative
25 assessments for each content area shall be comparable in rigor to the
26 skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the statewide
27 student assessment for each content area.

28 (2) Subject to the conditions in this section, a certificate of
29 academic achievement shall be obtained by most students at about the
30 age of sixteen, and is evidence that the students have successfully met
31 the state standard in the content areas included in the certificate.
32 With the exception of students satisfying the provisions of RCW
33 28A.155.045 or 28A.655.0611, acquisition of the certificate is required
34 for graduation from a public high school but is not the only
35 requirement for graduation.

36 (3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, with the exception
37 of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, a student who

1 meets the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics
2 content areas of the high school statewide student assessment shall
3 earn a certificate of academic achievement. If a student does not
4 successfully meet the state standards in one or more content areas
5 required for the certificate of academic achievement, then the student
6 may retake the assessment in the content area up to four times at no
7 cost to the student. If the student successfully meets the state
8 standards on a retake of the assessment then the student shall earn a
9 certificate of academic achievement. Once objective alternative
10 assessments are authorized pursuant to subsection ~~((+10))~~ (9) of this
11 section, a student may use the objective alternative assessments to
12 demonstrate that the student successfully meets the state standards for
13 that content area if the student has taken the statewide student
14 assessment at least once. If the student successfully meets the state
15 standards on the objective alternative assessments then the student
16 shall earn a certificate of academic achievement.

17 ~~(4) ((Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, a student must
18 meet the state standards in science in addition to the other content
19 areas required under subsection (3) of this section on the statewide
20 student assessment or the objective alternative assessments in order to
21 earn a certificate of academic achievement.~~

22 ~~(5))~~ The state board of education may not require the acquisition
23 of the certificate of academic achievement for students in home-based
24 instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, for students enrolled in private
25 schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or for students satisfying the
26 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045.

27 ~~((+6))~~ (5) A student may retain and use the highest result from
28 each successfully completed content area of the high school assessment.

29 ~~((+7))~~ (6) School districts must make available to students the
30 following options:

31 (a) To retake the statewide student assessment up to four times in
32 the content areas in which the student did not meet the state standards
33 if the student is enrolled in a public school; or

34 (b) To retake the statewide student assessment up to four times in
35 the content areas in which the student did not meet the state standards
36 if the student is enrolled in a high school completion program at a
37 community or technical college. The superintendent of public

1 instruction and the state board for community and technical colleges
2 shall jointly identify means by which students in these programs can be
3 assessed.

4 ~~((+8))~~ (7) Students who achieve the standard in a content area of
5 the high school assessment but who wish to improve their results shall
6 pay for retaking the assessment, using a uniform cost determined by the
7 superintendent of public instruction.

8 ~~((+9))~~ (8) Opportunities to retake the assessment at least twice
9 a year shall be available to each school district.

10 ~~((+10))~~ (9)(a) The office of the superintendent of public
11 instruction shall develop options for implementing objective
12 alternative assessments, which may include an appeals process for
13 students' scores, for students to demonstrate achievement of the state
14 academic standards. The objective alternative assessments shall be
15 comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must
16 demonstrate on the statewide student assessment and be objective in its
17 determination of student achievement of the state standards. Before
18 any objective alternative assessments in addition to those authorized
19 in RCW 28A.655.065 or (b) of this subsection are used by a student to
20 demonstrate that the student has met the state standards in a content
21 area required to obtain a certificate, the legislature shall formally
22 approve the use of any objective alternative assessments through the
23 omnibus appropriations act or by statute or concurrent resolution.

24 (b)(i) A student's score on the mathematics, reading or English, or
25 writing portion of the SAT or the ACT may be used as an objective
26 alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating that a
27 student has met or exceeded the state standards for the certificate of
28 academic achievement. The state board of education shall identify the
29 scores students must achieve on the relevant portion of the SAT or ACT
30 to meet or exceed the state standard in the relevant content area on
31 the statewide student assessment. ~~((A student's score on the science
32 portion of the ACT or the science subject area tests of the SAT may be
33 used as an objective alternative assessment under this section as soon
34 as the state board of education determines that sufficient data is
35 available to identify reliable equivalent scores for the science
36 content area of the statewide student assessment.))~~ After the first
37 scores are established, the state board may increase but not decrease
38 the scores required for students to meet or exceed the state standards.

1 (ii) A student who scores at least a three on the grading scale of
2 one to five for selected AP examinations may use the score as an
3 objective alternative assessment under this section for demonstrating
4 that a student has met or exceeded state standards for the certificate
5 of academic achievement. A score of three on the AP examinations in
6 calculus or statistics may be used as an alternative assessment for the
7 mathematics portion of the statewide student assessment. A score of
8 three on the AP examinations in English language and composition may be
9 used as an alternative assessment for the writing portion of the
10 statewide student assessment. A score of three on the AP examinations
11 in English literature and composition, macroeconomics, microeconomics,
12 psychology, United States history, world history, United States
13 government and politics, or comparative government and politics may be
14 used as an alternative assessment for the reading portion of the
15 statewide student assessment. ~~((A score of three on the AP examination
16 in biology, physics, chemistry, or environmental science may be used as
17 an alternative assessment for the science portion of the statewide
18 student assessment.~~

19 ~~(+11))~~ (10) By December 15, 2004, the house of representatives and
20 senate education committees shall obtain information and conclusions
21 from recognized, independent, national assessment experts regarding the
22 validity and reliability of the high school Washington assessment of
23 student learning for making individual student high school graduation
24 determinations.

25 ~~((+12))~~ (11) To help assure continued progress in academic
26 achievement as a foundation for high school graduation and to assure
27 that students are on track for high school graduation, each school
28 district shall prepare plans for and notify students and their parents
29 or legal guardians as provided in this subsection. Student learning
30 plans are required for eighth grade students who were not successful on
31 any or all of the content areas of the state assessment during the
32 previous school year or who may not be on track to graduate due to
33 credit deficiencies or absences. The parent or legal guardian shall be
34 notified about the information in the student learning plan, preferably
35 through a parent conference and at least annually. To the extent
36 feasible, schools serving English language learner students and their
37 parents shall translate the plan into the primary language of the

1 family. The plan shall include the following information as
2 applicable:

3 (a) The student's results on the state assessment;

4 (b) If the student is in the transitional bilingual program, the
5 score on his or her Washington language proficiency test II;

6 (c) Any credit deficiencies;

7 (d) The student's attendance rates over the previous two years;

8 (e) The student's progress toward meeting state and local
9 graduation requirements;

10 (f) The courses, competencies, and other steps needed to be taken
11 by the student to meet state academic standards and stay on track for
12 graduation;

13 (g) Remediation strategies and alternative education options
14 available to students, including informing students of the option to
15 continue to receive instructional services after grade twelve or until
16 the age of twenty-one;

17 (h) The alternative assessment options available to students under
18 this section and RCW 28A.655.065;

19 (i) School district programs, high school courses, and career and
20 technical education options available for students to meet graduation
21 requirements; and

22 (j) Available programs offered through skill centers or community
23 and technical colleges, including the college high school diploma
24 options under RCW 28B.50.535.

25 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.655.068 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 22 s 3 are each
26 amended to read as follows:

27 (1) Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, the statewide high school
28 assessment in science shall be an end-of-course assessment for biology
29 that measures the state standards for life sciences, in addition to
30 systems, inquiry, and application as they pertain to life sciences.

31 (2) The superintendent of public instruction may develop science
32 end-of-course assessments in subjects in addition to biology for
33 purposes of RCW 28A.655.061, when so directed by the legislature.

34 (3) The superintendent of public instruction may participate with
35 consortia of multiple states as common student learning standards and
36 assessments in science are developed. The superintendent of public
37 instruction, in consultation with the state board of education, may

1 modify the essential academic learning requirements and statewide
2 student assessments in science, including the high school assessment,
3 according to the multistate common student learning standards and
4 assessments as long as the education committees of the legislature have
5 opportunities for review before the modifications are adopted, as
6 provided under RCW 28A.655.070.

7 ~~((4) The statewide high school assessment under this section shall
8 be used to demonstrate that a student meets the state standards in the
9 science content area of the statewide student assessment for purposes
10 of RCW 28A.655.061.))~~

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