

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## E2SSB 6552

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### PARTIAL VETO C 217 L 14 Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Improving student success by modifying instructional hour and graduation requirements.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Dammeier, Litzow, Rivers, Tom, Fain, Hill, Kohl-Welles, Mullet, McAuliffe and Cleveland).

**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**  
**House Committee on Education**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** Career and Technical Education (CTE) Equivalencies. Under current law, school districts are directed to examine their credit-granting policies and award academic credit for CTE courses that they determine to be equivalent to an academic course. If a student is granted equivalency credit, the student's transcript reflects the academic course number and description.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is directed to provide professional development, technical assistance, and guidance for school districts to accomplish this equivalency crediting. OSPI developed a Course Equivalency Toolkit to assist districts in making these determinations. Although OSPI has a list of CTE courses that school districts consider equivalent, there is no data about the number of such credits actually granted. All decisions about granting equivalency credit are made by local school districts.

Instructional Hours. Revisions to the legislative definition of the Program of Basic Education adopted in 2009 require school districts to provide students with an increase in minimum instructional hours from a district-wide average of 1000 hours across all grades, to 1000 hours in each of grades one through six and 1080 hours in each of grades seven through 12. Initially this increase was to be implemented according to a schedule adopted by the Legislature. In 2011 the Legislature specified that the increase would not occur before the 2014-15 school year.

School districts may schedule the last five school days of the 180-day school year for non-instructional purposes for students graduating from high school.

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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 a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

High School Graduation Requirements. The State Board of Education (SBE) is statutorily authorized to establish the state minimum requirements for high school graduation through administrative rules. The current state requirements are to earn a minimum of 20 high school course credits; pass the state assessments or approved alternative assessments; complete a culminating project; and complete a high school and beyond plan (HSBP). While the issue has not been addressed in the Washington State courts, federal and other state courts have generally found that when high school graduation requirements are increased, sufficient notice must be provided to entering students so the students know what is required to earn a diploma and graduate from high school. Freshman students entering high school next year in the 2014-15 school year will be in the graduating class of 2018 if they graduate in four years.

*Credit Requirements.* The current credit requirements for the class of 2014 are three credits in English and mathematics, two and one-half credits in social studies, two credits in science with one of the credits a lab science, two credits in health and fitness, one credit in the arts and occupational education, and five and one-half credits in electives. SBE rule specifies the content of the three mathematics credits.

In 2009 the Legislature redefined the Program of Basic Education to provide students with the opportunity to complete 24 credits for high school graduation, subject to a phase-in implementation established by the Legislature. The course distribution requirements may be established by SBE. Changes in graduation requirements proposed by SBE must be submitted to the legislative education committees and the Quality Education Council for review before they are adopted. Changes that are found to have a fiscal impact on school districts take effect only if formally authorized and funded by the Legislature.

In 2010 SBE approved, but did not implement, a 24-credit high school graduation framework. In 2011 SBE implemented a phase-in of changes within the existing required 20 credits that were estimated to have no cost to school districts to take effect with the graduating class of 2016, although districts may seek a two-year extension to implement the requirements. The changes require an additional credit in English for a total of four, an additional one-half credit in social studies for a total of three, and one and one-half fewer credits in elective courses for a total of four. Additionally, SBE adopted a two-for-one policy that enables students taking a CTE course that is equivalent to an academic course to satisfy two graduation requirements while earning one credit.

In 2014 SBE adopted revisions to its 24-credit graduation requirement framework originally adopted in 2010. The current proposal differs from the requirements for the class of 2016 by requiring an additional credit in lab science and the arts, and two additional credits in world languages. One of the arts credits and both world languages credits may be substituted with personal pathway requirements. Personalized pathway requirements are credits that can be substituted if associated with a student's post-secondary pathway, as provided in the student's HSBP. Additionally, up to 2 credits may be waived by local administrators for students who have attempted 24 credits.

Prototypical School Funding Formula. In 2009 the Legislature adopted a statutory framework for a funding allocation model for public schools based on prototypical schools. The statute provides that the use of prototypical schools is intended to illustrate the level of resources needed to operate a school of a particular size with particular types and grade

levels of students using commonly understood terms and inputs, such as class size, hours of instruction, and specified staff positions. Actual state funding allocations are adjusted from the school prototypes based on the actual number of students in each grade level at each school in the district. In 2010 the Legislature adopted in statute funding values or amounts for each of the specified elements of the prototypical school funding framework based on recommendations from a technical workgroup. The adopted funding values were intended to reflect the level of state allocations provided at the time.

2013-15 Omnibus Appropriation Act. The 2013-15 Omnibus Appropriations Act provides \$97 million to implement the increase in instructional hours for students enrolled in grades seven through 12, beginning with the 2014-15 school year. The amount provided is calculated based on the cost of 2.222 additional hours of instruction per week. Additional funding is also provided to increase the allocation of guidance counselors from 1.909 to 2.009 for each prototypical high school in the 2013-15 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO). OEO was established in 2006 to serve as an independent resource for parents and families regarding their involvement with public schools. OEO does not represent parents, but does respond to complaints and attempts to mediate concerns with school officials. Additionally, OEO collects data and makes annual public policy recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, and SBE for improving the education system, promoting family engagement in education, and identifying strategies to close the achievement gap.

**Summary:** The Legislature intends to address flexibility for increasing instructional hours and implementing 24 credits for high school graduation. The intent includes the educational policy reason for shifting the focus and intent of the funding provided for the 2014-15 school year, from compliance with the minimum instructional hours offering to assisting school districts to provide an opportunity for students to earn 24 credits for high school graduation and obtain a meaningful diploma.

CTE Equivalencies. OSPI, in consultation with one or more technical working groups, must develop curriculum frameworks for a selected list of CTE courses whose content in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is considered equivalent, in full or in part, to science or mathematics courses that meet high school graduation requirements. The course content must be aligned with the state essential academic learning requirements and industry standards. OSPI must submit the course list and curriculum frameworks to SBE for review, public comment, and approval before the 2015-16 school year. The list may be periodically updated thereafter.

School districts must provide the opportunity for high school students to access at least one science or mathematics CTE course on the OSPI list. School districts with fewer than 2000 students may apply to SBE for a waiver from this requirement.

Instructional Hours. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, school districts must offer the minimum of 1000 hours for grades one through eight and 1080 hours for grades nine through 12. Current law allowing districts to use a district-wide average to meet the instructional hours requirement is maintained instead of changing to requiring the minimum number of hours to be provided in each grade level.

Hours scheduled for non-instructional purposes during the last five days of the school year for graduating seniors must count toward the minimum instructional hour requirement.

High School Graduation Requirements. Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, the culminating project must not be an SBE requirement for graduation. SBE must adopt rules to implement the 24-credit requirement for high school graduation based on the career and college framework to take effect beginning with the graduating class of 2019. SBE rules must provide that the content of the third credit of mathematics and the third credit of science may be chosen by the student based on the student's HSBP with agreement of the student's parent, guardian, school counselor, or school principal.

School districts must provide students instruction that provides the opportunity to complete 24 credits for high school graduation, beginning with the graduating class of 2019. School districts may apply to SBE to implement the career and college ready graduation requirements beginning with the graduating class of 2020 or 2021, instead of the graduating class of 2019. School districts may waive up to two credits of the 24-credit requirements for individual students based on unusual circumstances and in accordance with written school district policy. By June 30, 2015, the Washington State School Directors' Association must adopt a model policy for granting individual student waivers of up to two course credits. The policy is to assist school districts in providing students the opportunity to complete graduation requirements without discrimination or disparate impact.

Prototypical School Funding Formula. A minimum lab science class size enhancement is provided to fund two laboratory science courses per full-time equivalent student to be completed within grades nine through 12. The enhancement is provided at an average class size of 19.98 full-time equivalent students. An additional allocation of \$164.25 for maintenance, supplies, and operating costs are provided to students in grades nine through 12 above the current allocation. High school guidance counselors are increased from 1.909 to 2.539 for each prototypical high school.

OEO. OEO must convene a three-year taskforce on students with special needs to examine barriers in earning a diploma and fully accessing the education program provided by the public schools; and to recommend improved coordination and successful education and service delivery models. Reports are due by December 15 beginning in 2014 and each year thereafter until 2016.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	45	4	
House	93	5	(House amended)
Senate	45	2	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** June 12, 2014  
September 1, 2014 (Section 206)  
September 1, 2015 (Sections 103 and 104)

**Partial Veto Summary:** The Governor vetoed the OEO three-year task force because it is duplicative of a similar directive to the OEO in the 2014 supplemental budget, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6002.