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SENATE BILL 6494

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State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Senators Hobbs, McAuliffe, Hargrove, Swecker, Pridemore, Rasmussen, and Marr

Read first time 01/17/08. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to using multiple measures to meet high school  
2 graduation requirements; amending RCW 28A.655.0611, 28A.155.045, and  
3 28A.230.090; reenacting and amending RCW 28A.655.061; adding a new  
4 section to chapter 28A.655 RCW; creating a new section; and declaring  
5 an emergency.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** It is the intent of the legislature to  
8 account for a student's entire high school academic history by  
9 implementing an assessment system that evaluates a student's readiness  
10 to graduate based on multiple measures. This method recognizes all of  
11 the state's graduation requirements, considers the academic impact and  
12 benefit of each, and puts all in proper perspective. It honors a well-  
13 rounded, rigorous, and challenging educational experience that prepares  
14 students for a changing and complex twenty-first century. It  
15 recognizes that while all students can learn at high levels, each  
16 student is unique in his or her learning style. Students demonstrate  
17 competencies through their own strengths, learning styles, and  
18 different formats, and academically develop at different rates over  
19 time. In this system, the academic standards expected to be mastered

1 remain constant but the time and manner by which a student demonstrates  
2 those standards can change. This system upholds all of the state's  
3 four learning goals throughout a student's high school tenure. It  
4 provides the opportunity for students to develop, grasp, and  
5 demonstrate many learning objectives, including those beyond the tenth  
6 grade.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.655  
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) Beginning with the class of 2009, every student shall have the  
10 opportunity to graduate with a high school diploma by obtaining a set  
11 weighted graduation score, as established by the state board of  
12 education, in relation to his or her performance in the entire multiple  
13 measures high school assessment system, as calculated under subsection  
14 (2) of this section. To qualify for graduation, a student must  
15 complete each of the five components in the high school assessment  
16 system. A student who graduates using this multiple measures approach  
17 does not receive a certificate of academic achievement or certificate  
18 of individual achievement. The multiple measures high school  
19 assessment system is comprised of the following five components:

20 (a) Computation of the average grade point for those courses  
21 required for graduation as determined by the state board of education;

22 (b) Computation of the average grade point for those courses  
23 required locally for graduation;

24 (c) Completion of the high school and beyond plan;

25 (d) Completion of a culminating project; and

26 (e) Student scores on the assessments or alternative assessments  
27 established under RCW 28A.655.061 or 28A.155.045.

28 (2)(a) Each component shall be evaluated using a four-point grading  
29 system and each component shall be assigned a different percentage  
30 weight for purposes of calculating the student's weighted graduation  
31 score. The purpose of the differently weighted components is to allow  
32 a high score on certain components to offset lower scores on other  
33 components. The state board of education shall establish:

34 (i) The weighted average graduation score, on a scale of one to  
35 four, that is necessary for a student to graduate;

36 (ii) Guidelines for schools on how to establish the point values to

1 be assigned to each of the five components of the high school  
2 assessment system; and

3 (iii) Guidelines to assist schools in understanding how to  
4 calculate the weighted graduation score.

5 (b) In creating the guidelines, the state board of education shall  
6 use the minimum criteria in this subsection (2)(b) but may establish  
7 additional requirements for each component:

8 (i) For the components in subsection (1)(a) and (b) of this  
9 section, students must attain a minimum achievement of a passing grade  
10 on every course required for graduation in order to receive a numerical  
11 score. The components in subsection (1)(a) and (b) of this section  
12 shall, in total, have a forty percent weight of the whole on a one  
13 hundred percent scale.

14 (ii) Students must take the Washington assessment of student  
15 learning at least once. The score for the component in subsection  
16 (1)(e) of this section shall have a forty percent weight of the whole  
17 on a one hundred percent scale.

18 (iii) The components in subsection (1)(c) and (d) of this section  
19 shall each have a ten percent weight of the whole on a one hundred  
20 percent scale.

21 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.655.061 and 2007 c 355 s 5 and 2007 c 354 s 2 are  
22 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

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

33 (2) Subject to the conditions in this section, a certificate of  
34 academic achievement ~~((shall be obtained by most students at about the  
35 age of sixteen, and))~~ is evidence that the students have successfully  
36 met the state standard in the content areas included in the  
37 certificate. With the exception of students satisfying the provisions

1 of section 2 of this act, RCW 28A.155.045, or 28A.655.0611, acquisition  
2 of the certificate is required for graduation from a public high school  
3 but is not the only requirement for graduation.

4 (3) Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, with the exception  
5 of students satisfying the provisions of RCW 28A.155.045, a student who  
6 meets the state standards on the reading, writing, and mathematics  
7 content areas of the high school Washington assessment of student  
8 learning shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. If a  
9 student does not successfully meet the state standards in one or more  
10 content areas required for the certificate of academic achievement,  
11 then the student may retake the assessment in the content area up to  
12 four times at no cost to the student. If the student successfully  
13 meets the state standards on a retake of the assessment then the  
14 student shall earn a certificate of academic achievement. Once  
15 objective alternative assessments are authorized pursuant to subsection  
16 (10) of this section, a student may use the objective alternative  
17 assessments to demonstrate that the student successfully meets the  
18 state standards for that content area if the student has taken the  
19 Washington assessment of student learning at least once. If the  
20 student successfully meets the state standards on the objective  
21 alternative assessments then the student shall earn a certificate of  
22 academic achievement.

23 (4) Beginning no later than with the graduating class of 2013, a  
24 student must meet the state standards in science in addition to the  
25 other content areas required under subsection (3) of this section on  
26 the Washington assessment of student learning or the objective  
27 alternative assessments in order to earn a certificate of academic  
28 achievement. The state board of education may adopt a rule that  
29 implements the requirements of this subsection (4) beginning with a  
30 graduating class before the graduating class of 2013, if the state  
31 board of education adopts the rule by September 1st of the freshman  
32 school year of the graduating class to which the requirements of this  
33 subsection (4) apply. The state board of education's authority under  
34 this subsection (4) does not alter the requirement that any change in  
35 performance standards for the tenth grade assessment must comply with  
36 RCW 28A.305.130.

37 (5) The state board of education may not require the acquisition of  
38 the certificate of academic achievement for students in home-based

1 instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW, for students enrolled in private  
2 schools under chapter 28A.195 RCW, or for students satisfying the  
3 provisions of RCW 28A.155.045.

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

6 (7) School districts must make available to students the following  
7 options:

8 (a) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to  
9 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the  
10 state standards if the student is enrolled in a public school; or

11 (b) To retake the Washington assessment of student learning up to  
12 four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the  
13 state standards if the student is enrolled in a high school completion  
14 program at a community or technical college. The superintendent of  
15 public instruction and the state board for community and technical  
16 colleges shall jointly identify means by which students in these  
17 programs can be assessed.

18 (8) Students who achieve the standard in a content area of the high  
19 school assessment but who wish to improve their results shall pay for  
20 retaking the assessment, using a uniform cost determined by the  
21 superintendent of public instruction.

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

24 (10)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction  
25 shall develop options for implementing objective alternative  
26 assessments, which may include an appeals process for students' scores,  
27 for students to demonstrate achievement of the state academic  
28 standards. The objective alternative assessments shall be comparable  
29 in rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate  
30 on the Washington assessment of student learning and be objective in  
31 its determination of student achievement of the state standards.  
32 Before any objective alternative assessments in addition to those  
33 authorized in RCW 28A.655.065 or (b) of this subsection are used by a  
34 student to demonstrate that the student has met the state standards in  
35 a content area required to obtain a certificate, the legislature shall  
36 formally approve the use of any objective alternative assessments  
37 through the omnibus appropriations act or by statute or concurrent  
38 resolution.

1 (b)(i) A student's score on the mathematics, reading or English, or  
2 writing portion of the scholastic assessment test (SAT) or the American  
3 college test (ACT) may be used as an objective alternative assessment  
4 under this section for demonstrating that a student has met or exceeded  
5 the state standards for the certificate of academic achievement. The  
6 state board of education shall identify the scores students must  
7 achieve on the relevant portion of the SAT or ACT to meet or exceed the  
8 state standard in the relevant content area on the Washington  
9 assessment of student learning. The state board of education shall  
10 identify the first scores by December 1, 2007. After the first scores  
11 are established, the state board may increase but not decrease the  
12 scores required for students to meet or exceed the state standards.

13 (ii) Until August 31, 2008, a student's score on the mathematics  
14 portion of the preliminary scholastic assessment test (PSAT) may be  
15 used as an objective alternative assessment under this section for  
16 demonstrating that a student has met or exceeded the state standard for  
17 the certificate of academic achievement. The state board of education  
18 shall identify the score students must achieve on the mathematics  
19 portion of the PSAT to meet or exceed the state standard in that  
20 content area on the Washington assessment of student learning.

21 (iii) A student who scores at least a three on the grading scale of  
22 one to five for selected (~~(advance placement)~~) AP examinations may use  
23 the score as an objective alternative assessment under this section for  
24 demonstrating that a student has met or exceeded state standards for  
25 the certificate of academic achievement. A score of three on the  
26 (~~(advance placement)~~) AP examinations in calculus or statistics may be  
27 used as an alternative assessment for the mathematics portion of the  
28 Washington assessment of student learning. A score of three on the  
29 (~~(advance placement)~~) AP examinations in English language and  
30 composition may be used as an alternative assessment for the writing  
31 portion of the Washington assessment of student learning. A score of  
32 three on the (~~(advance placement)~~) AP examinations in English  
33 literature and composition, macroeconomics, microeconomics, psychology,  
34 United States history, world history, United States government and  
35 politics, or comparative government and politics may be used as an  
36 alternative assessment for the reading portion of the Washington  
37 assessment of student learning.

1 (11) By December 15, 2004, the house of representatives and senate  
2 education committees shall obtain information and conclusions from  
3 recognized, independent, national assessment experts regarding the  
4 validity and reliability of the high school Washington assessment of  
5 student learning for making individual student high school graduation  
6 determinations.

7 (12) To help assure continued progress in academic achievement as  
8 a foundation for high school graduation and to assure that students are  
9 on track for high school graduation, each school district shall prepare  
10 plans for students as provided in this subsection (12).

11 (a) Student learning plans are required for eighth through twelfth  
12 grade students who were not successful on any or all of the content  
13 areas of the Washington assessment for student learning during the  
14 previous school year. The plan shall include the courses,  
15 competencies, and other steps needed to be taken by the student to meet  
16 state academic standards and stay on track for graduation. If  
17 applicable, the plan shall also include the high school completion  
18 pilot program created under RCW 28B.50.534.

19 (i) The parent or guardian shall be notified, preferably through a  
20 parent conference, of the student's results on the Washington  
21 assessment of student learning, actions the school intends to take to  
22 improve the student's skills in any content area in which the student  
23 was unsuccessful, strategies to help them improve their student's  
24 skills, and the content of the student's plan.

25 (ii) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the  
26 student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the  
27 plan made as necessary.

28 (b) All fifth grade students who were not successful in one or more  
29 of the content areas of the fourth grade Washington assessment of  
30 student learning shall have a student learning plan.

31 (i) The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified,  
32 preferably through a parent conference, of the student's results on the  
33 Washington assessment of student learning, actions the school intends  
34 to take to improve the student's skills in any content area in which  
35 the student was unsuccessful, and provide strategies to help them  
36 improve their student's skills.

37 (ii) Progress made on the student plan shall be reported to the

1 student's parents or guardian at least annually and adjustments to the  
2 plan made as necessary.

3 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.655.0611 and 2007 c 354 s 4 are each amended to  
4 read as follows:

5 (1) In addition to the students meeting the requirements of section  
6 2 of this act, beginning with the graduating class of 2008 and through  
7 no later than the graduating class of 2012, students may graduate from  
8 high school without earning a certificate of academic achievement or a  
9 certificate of individual achievement if they:

10 (a) Have not successfully met the mathematics standard on the high  
11 school Washington assessment of student learning, an approved objective  
12 alternative assessment, or an alternate assessment developed for  
13 eligible special education students;

14 (b) Have successfully met the state standard in the other content  
15 areas required for a certificate under RCW 28A.655.061 or 28A.155.045;

16 (c) Have met all other state and school district graduation  
17 requirements; and

18 (d)(i) For the graduating class of 2008, successfully earn one  
19 additional high school mathematics credit or career and technical  
20 course equivalent, including courses offered at skill centers, after  
21 the student's eleventh grade year intended to increase the student's  
22 mathematics proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the mathematics  
23 standards assessed on the high school Washington assessment of student  
24 learning and continue to take the appropriate mathematics assessment at  
25 least once annually until graduation; and

26 (ii) For the remaining graduating classes under this section,  
27 successfully earn two additional mathematics credits or career and  
28 technical course equivalent, including courses offered at skill  
29 centers, after the student's tenth grade year intended to increase the  
30 student's mathematics proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the  
31 mathematics standards assessed on the high school Washington assessment  
32 of student learning and continue to take the appropriate mathematics  
33 assessment at least once annually until graduation.

34 (2) The state board of education may adopt a rule that ends the  
35 application of this section with a graduating class before the  
36 graduating class of 2012, if the state board of education adopts the  
37 rule by September 1st of the freshman school year of the graduating



1 class to which the provisions of this section no longer apply. The  
2 state board of education's authority under this section does not alter  
3 the requirement that any change in performance standards for the tenth  
4 grade assessment must comply with RCW 28A.305.130.

5 (3) This section expires August 31, 2013.

6 **Sec. 5.** RCW 28A.155.045 and 2007 c 354 s 3 are each amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students served under  
9 this chapter, who are not appropriately assessed by the high school  
10 Washington assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061, even with  
11 accommodations, may earn a certificate of individual achievement. The  
12 certificate may be earned using multiple ways to demonstrate skills and  
13 abilities commensurate with their individual education programs. The  
14 determination of whether the high school assessment system is  
15 appropriate shall be made by the student's individual education program  
16 team. Except as provided in RCW 28A.655.0611 or section 2 of this act,  
17 for these students, the certificate of individual achievement is  
18 required for graduation from a public high school, but need not be the  
19 only requirement for graduation. When measures other than the high  
20 school assessment system as defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used, the  
21 measures shall be in agreement with the appropriate educational  
22 opportunity provided for the student as required by this chapter. The  
23 superintendent of public instruction shall develop the guidelines for  
24 determining which students should not be required to participate in the  
25 high school assessment system and which types of assessments are  
26 appropriate to use.

27 When measures other than the high school assessment system as  
28 defined in RCW 28A.655.061 are used for high school graduation  
29 purposes, the student's high school transcript shall note whether that  
30 student has earned a certificate of individual achievement.

31 Nothing in this section shall be construed to deny a student the  
32 right to participation in the high school assessment system as defined  
33 in RCW 28A.655.061, and, upon successfully meeting the high school  
34 standard, receipt of the certificate of academic achievement.

35 **Sec. 6.** RCW 28A.230.090 and 2006 c 114 s 3 are each amended to  
36 read as follows:

1 (1) The state board of education shall establish high school  
2 graduation requirements or equivalencies for students, except those  
3 equivalencies established by local high schools or school districts  
4 under RCW 28A.230.097.

5 (a) Any course in Washington state history and government used to  
6 fulfill high school graduation requirements shall consider including  
7 information on the culture, history, and government of the American  
8 Indian peoples who were the first inhabitants of the state.

9 (b) Students must meet the certificate of academic achievement  
10 requirements under RCW 28A.655.061 ((~~or~~)), the certificate of  
11 individual achievement requirements under RCW 28A.155.045 ((~~are~~  
12 required for graduation)), or the requirements of the multiple measures  
13 high school assessment system as established in section 2 of this act  
14 in order to graduate from a public high school ((~~but~~)). These are not  
15 the only requirements for graduation.

16 (c) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board's  
17 high school graduation requirements for a high school and beyond plan  
18 shall remain at the local level.

19 (2) In recognition of the statutory authority of the state board of  
20 education to establish and enforce minimum high school graduation  
21 requirements, the state board shall periodically reevaluate the  
22 graduation requirements and shall report such findings to the  
23 legislature in a timely manner as determined by the state board. The  
24 state board shall reevaluate the graduation requirements for students  
25 enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous career and technical  
26 education programs, particularly those programs that lead to a  
27 certificate or credential that is state or nationally recognized. The  
28 purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students enrolled in these  
29 programs have sufficient opportunity to earn a certificate of academic  
30 achievement, complete the program and earn the program's certificate or  
31 credential, and complete other state and local graduation requirements.  
32 The board shall ((~~reports~~—[~~report~~])) report its findings and  
33 recommendations for additional flexibility in graduation requirements,  
34 if necessary, to the legislature by December 1, 2007.

35 (3) Pursuant to any requirement for instruction in languages other  
36 than English established by the state board of education or a local  
37 school district, or both, for purposes of high school graduation,  
38 students who receive instruction in American sign language or one or

1 more American Indian languages shall be considered to have satisfied  
2 the state or local school district graduation requirement for  
3 instruction in one or more languages other than English.

4 (4) If requested by the student and his or her family, a student  
5 who has completed high school courses before attending high school  
6 shall be given high school credit which shall be applied to fulfilling  
7 high school graduation requirements if:

8 (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic  
9 level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth  
10 grade classes, and the student has successfully passed by completing  
11 the same course requirements and examinations as the high school  
12 students enrolled in the class; or

13 (b) The academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for  
14 seventh and eighth grade classes and the course would qualify for high  
15 school credit, because the course is similar or equivalent to a course  
16 offered at a high school in the district as determined by the school  
17 district board of directors.

18 (5) Students who have taken and successfully completed high school  
19 courses under the circumstances in subsection (4) of this section shall  
20 not be required to take an additional competency examination or perform  
21 any other additional assignment to receive credit.

22 (6) At the college or university level, five quarter or three  
23 semester hours equals one high school credit.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
25 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
26 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect  
27 immediately.

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