
BILL REQUEST - CODE REVISER'S OFFICE

BILL REQ. #: Z-0089.1/23

ATTY/TYPIST: CC:jlb

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Expanding high school graduation pathway options.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding high school graduation pathway
2 options; amending RCW 28A.655.250 and 28A.655.260; and creating a new
3 section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) In 2019 the legislature decoupled
6 statewide assessments from graduation requirements and created a
7 system of multiple graduation pathway options, which took effect
8 beginning with the class of 2020. The legislature intended for the
9 graduation pathways to be student-focused, adaptable, rigorous, and
10 meaningful ways for students to demonstrate appropriate readiness in
11 support of their individualized career and college goals.

12 (2) The legislature anticipated that school districts might face
13 barriers to implementing the pathways and students might face
14 barriers to accessing the pathway options. The legislature charged
15 the state board of education with research on the first three years
16 of implementation to identify barriers and provide recommendations
17 for changes to the existing pathways and additional pathway options.

18 (3) While implementation of the graduation pathway options was
19 significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the research on
20 early implementation identified access and equity barriers that would
21 exist even without the pandemic. The research shows that the initial

1 set of graduation pathway options do not meet the needs of all
2 students. There is often a lack of alignment between pathway options
3 and students' individualized goals for high school and beyond.
4 Overall, students report a need for more relevant and authentic
5 options.

6 (4) The legislature recognizes that students can demonstrate
7 readiness in multiple ways and recognizes the need to expand
8 graduation pathways in order to provide options that are student-
9 focused, individualized, relevant, and that support all student
10 needs. Research shows that performance-based assessments are valid
11 ways of measuring students' readiness for success in college and
12 careers. Further, research shows that performance-based assessments
13 are associated with increased student engagement, skill development,
14 critical thinking, and postsecondary success. The legislature
15 recognizes that a performance-based graduation pathway option
16 supports the state's transition to mastery-based learning.

17 (5) Therefore, the legislature intends to create graduation
18 pathway options that allow students to demonstrate their readiness in
19 performance-based ways, in addition to the existing test-based and
20 course-based options, and in core subject areas that most strongly
21 align with the student's individualized goals for high school and
22 beyond. Further, the legislature intends to create ongoing
23 requirements to monitor the graduation pathway options implementation
24 at both the state and local levels to ensure accountability and
25 equitable offerings. In providing a wider variety of graduation
26 pathway options, the state maintains its commitment to high standards
27 for earning a meaningful high school diploma that prepares students
28 for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, civic
29 engagement, and lifelong learning.

30 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.655.250 and 2021 c 7 s 3 are each amended to
31 read as follows:

32 (1)(a) Beginning with the class of 2020, except as provided in
33 RCW 28A.230.320, graduation from a public high school and the earning
34 of a high school diploma must include the following:

35 (i) Satisfying the graduation requirements established by the
36 state board of education under RCW 28A.230.090 and any graduation
37 requirements established by the applicable public high school or
38 school district;

39 (ii) Satisfying credit requirements for graduation;

1 (iii) Demonstrating career and college readiness through
2 completion of the high school and beyond plan as required by RCW
3 28A.230.090; and

4 (iv) Meeting the requirements of at least one graduation pathway
5 option established in this section.

6 (b) Successful completion of the components in (a) of this
7 subsection together signals a student's readiness to graduate with a
8 meaningful high school diploma that fulfills the diploma purpose
9 established in RCW 28A.230.090.

10 (2) The pathway options established in this section are intended
11 to provide a student with multiple ((pathways to graduating with a
12 meaningful high school diploma that are tailored to the goals of the
13 student)) ways, including test-based, course-based, and performance-
14 based options, to demonstrate readiness in furtherance of the
15 student's individual goals for high school and beyond. For the
16 purposes of this section, "demonstrate readiness" means the student
17 is able to apply state learning standards in: (a) English language
18 arts and mathematics; or (b) two or more core subject areas that most
19 directly align with the student's high school and beyond plan goals
20 under RCW 28A.230.090. A student may choose to pursue one or more of
21 the pathway options under ((b)) subsection (3) of this
22 ((subsection)) section, but any pathway option used by a student to
23 demonstrate career and college readiness must be in alignment with
24 the student's high school and beyond plan.

25 ((b)) (3) The following graduation pathway options may be used
26 to demonstrate career and college readiness in accordance with
27 ((a)(iv)) subsection (1)(a)(iv) of this ((subsection)) section:

28 ((i)) (a) Meet or exceed the graduation standard established by
29 the state board of education under RCW 28A.305.130 on the statewide
30 high school assessments in English language arts and mathematics as
31 provided for under RCW 28A.655.070;

32 ((ii)) (b) Complete and qualify for college credit in dual
33 credit courses in English language arts and mathematics. For the
34 purposes of this subsection, "dual credit course" means a course in
35 which a student qualifies for college and high school credit in
36 English language arts or mathematics upon successfully completing the
37 course;

38 ((iii)) (c) Earn high school credit in a high school transition
39 course in English language arts and mathematics, an example of which
40 includes a bridge to college course. For the purposes of this

1 subsection ~~((1)(b)(iii))~~ (3)(c), "high school transition course"
2 means an English language arts or mathematics course offered in high
3 school where successful completion by a high school student ensures
4 the student college-level placement at participating institutions of
5 higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016. High school transition
6 courses must satisfy core or elective credit graduation requirements
7 established by the state board of education. A student's successful
8 completion of a high school transition course does not entitle the
9 student to be admitted to an institution of higher education as
10 defined in RCW 28B.10.016;

11 ~~((iv))~~ (d) Earn high school credit, with a C+ grade ~~(, or~~
12 ~~receiving a three or higher on the AP exam, or equivalent,)~~ or
13 higher in AP, international baccalaureate, or Cambridge international
14 courses in English language arts and mathematics; or ~~(receiving a~~
15 ~~four or higher on international baccalaureate exams. For English~~
16 ~~language arts, successfully completing any of the following courses~~
17 ~~meets the standard: AP English language and composition literature,~~
18 ~~macroeconomics, microeconomics, psychology, United States history,~~
19 ~~world history, United States government and politics, or comparative~~
20 ~~government and politics; or any of the international baccalaureate~~
21 ~~individuals and societies courses. For mathematics, successfully~~
22 ~~completing any of the following courses meets the standard: AP~~
23 ~~statistics, computer science, computer science principles, or~~
24 ~~calculus; or any of the international baccalaureate mathematics~~
25 ~~courses))~~ earn at least the minimum scores outlined in RCW
26 28B.10.054(1) on the corresponding exams. The state board of
27 education shall establish by rule the list of AP, international
28 baccalaureate, and Cambridge international courses of which
29 successful completion meets the standard in this subsection for
30 English language arts and for mathematics;

31 ~~((v))~~ (e) Meet or exceed the scores established by the state
32 board of education for the mathematics portion and the reading,
33 English, or writing portion of the SAT or ACT;

34 ~~((vi))~~ (f) Meet any combination of at least one English
35 language arts option and at least one mathematics option established
36 in ~~((b)(i) through (v))~~ (a) through (e) of this subsection ~~((1))~~;

37 ~~((vii))~~ (g) Meet standard in the armed services vocational
38 aptitude battery; ~~(and~~

39 ~~(viii))~~ (h) Complete a sequence of career and technical
40 education courses that are relevant to a student's postsecondary

1 pathway, including those leading to workforce entry, state or
2 nationally approved apprenticeships, or postsecondary education, and
3 that meet either: The curriculum requirements of core plus programs
4 for aerospace, maritime, health care, information technology, or
5 construction and manufacturing; or the minimum criteria identified in
6 RCW 28A.700.030. Nothing in this subsection (~~((1)(b)(viii))~~) (3)(h)
7 requires a student to enroll in a preparatory course that is approved
8 under RCW 28A.700.030 for the purposes of demonstrating career and
9 college readiness under this section(~~(-~~

10 ~~(2))~~) ;

11 (i)(i) Complete a performance-based learning experience through
12 which the student applies knowledge and skills in a real-world
13 context, providing evidence of applying state learning standards in
14 at least two of the mandatory core subject areas identified by the
15 state board of education under RCW 28A.230.090 that are most directly
16 aligned with the student's education or career goals as stated in the
17 student's high school and beyond plan. The performance-based learning
18 experience may take a variety of forms, such as a project, practicum,
19 or cultural activity, and may result in a variety of products that
20 can be evaluated, such as a performance, presentation, portfolio,
21 report, film, or exhibit.

22 (ii) The performance-based learning experience must conform to
23 state requirements established in rule by the state board of
24 education addressing the safety and quality of the performance-based
25 learning experience and the authentic performance-based assessment
26 criteria for determining the student has applied the applicable
27 learning standards. The rules adopted by the state board of education
28 may allow external parties, including community leaders and
29 professionals, to participate in the evaluation of the student's
30 performance and must include at least one certificated teacher with
31 an endorsement in each relevant subject area or with other applicable
32 qualifications as permitted by the professional educator standards
33 board.

34 (iii) Prior to offering the performance-based learning experience
35 graduation pathway in this subsection (3)(i) to students, the school
36 district board of directors shall adopt a written policy in
37 conformity with applicable state requirements; and

38 (j) Complete a work-related learning experience through which the
39 student applies state learning standards in at least two of the
40 mandatory core subject areas most directly aligned with the student's

1 high school and beyond plan goals. The work-related learning
2 experience must meet the same requirements as in (i)(ii) of this
3 subsection and may include paid or unpaid work experience, community
4 service, internship, apprenticeship, or preapprenticeship. Prior to
5 offering the work-related learning experience pathway in this
6 subsection (3)(j) to students, the school district board of directors
7 shall adopt a written policy in conformity with applicable state
8 requirements.

9 (4) While the legislature encourages school districts to make all
10 pathway options established in this section available to their high
11 school students, and to expand their pathway options until that goal
12 is met, school districts have discretion in determining which pathway
13 options under this section they will offer to students.

14 ~~((3))~~ School districts, however, must annually provide students
15 in grades eight through 12 and their parents or legal guardians with
16 comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options
17 offered by the school district and are strongly encouraged to begin
18 providing this information beginning in sixth grade. School districts
19 must provide this information in a manner that conforms with the
20 school district's language access policy and procedures as required
21 under RCW 28A.183.040.

22 (5)(a) The state board of education shall adopt rules to
23 implement the graduation pathway options established in this section.

24 (b) The state board of education shall consult with
25 representatives from postsecondary education and businesses prior to
26 adopting rules to implement the graduation pathways established in
27 subsection (3)(i) and (j) of this section.

28 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.655.260 and 2021 c 144 s 3 are each amended to
29 read as follows:

30 (1) The superintendent of public instruction shall collect the
31 following information from school districts: Which of the graduation
32 pathways under RCW 28A.655.250 are available to students at each of
33 the school districts; and the number of students using each
34 graduation pathway for graduation purposes. This information shall be
35 reported annually to the education committees of the legislature
36 beginning January 10, 2021. To the extent feasible, data on student
37 participation in each of the graduation pathways shall be
38 disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and receipt of free or
39 reduced-price lunch.

1 (2) ~~((Beginning August 1, 2019, the state board of education~~
2 ~~shall survey interested parties regarding what additional graduation~~
3 ~~pathways should be added to the existing graduation pathways~~
4 ~~identified in RCW 28A.655.250 and whether modifications should be~~
5 ~~made to any of the existing pathways. Interested parties shall~~
6 ~~include at a minimum: High school students; recent high school~~
7 ~~graduates; representatives from the state board for community and~~
8 ~~technical colleges and four-year higher education institutions;~~
9 ~~representatives from the apprenticeship and training council;~~
10 ~~associations representing business; members of the educational~~
11 ~~opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee; and~~
12 ~~associations representing educators, school board members, school~~
13 ~~administrators, superintendents, and parents. The state board of~~
14 ~~education shall provide reports to the education committees of the~~
15 ~~legislature by August 1, 2020, and December 10, 2022, summarizing the~~
16 ~~information collected in the surveys.~~

17 (3) ~~Using the data reported by the superintendent of public~~
18 ~~instruction under subsection (1) of this section, the state board of~~
19 ~~education shall survey a sampling of the school districts unable to~~
20 ~~provide all of the graduation pathways under RCW 28A.655.250 in order~~
21 ~~to identify the types of barriers to implementation school districts~~
22 ~~have. Using the survey results from this subsection and the survey~~
23 ~~results collected under subsection (2) of this section, the state~~
24 ~~board of education shall review the existing graduation pathways,~~
25 ~~suggested changes to those graduation pathways, and the options for~~
26 ~~additional graduation pathways, and shall provide a report to the~~
27 ~~education committees of the legislature by December 10, 2022, on the~~
28 ~~following:~~

29 (a) ~~Recommendations on whether changes to the existing pathways~~
30 ~~should be made and what those changes should be;~~

31 (b) ~~The barriers school districts have to offering all of the~~
32 ~~graduation pathways and recommendations for ways to eliminate or~~
33 ~~reduce those barriers for school districts;~~

34 (c) ~~Whether all students have equitable access to all of the~~
35 ~~graduation pathways and, if not, recommendations for reducing the~~
36 ~~barriers students may have to accessing all of the graduation~~
37 ~~pathways; and~~

38 (d) ~~Whether additional graduation pathways should be included and~~
39 ~~recommendations for what those pathways should be)) The state board~~
40 ~~of education shall review and monitor the implementation of the~~

1 graduation pathway options to ensure school district compliance with
2 requirements established under RCW 28A.655.250 and subsection (3) of
3 this section. The reviews and monitoring required by this subsection
4 may be conducted concurrently with other oversight and monitoring
5 conducted by the state board of education. The information shall be
6 collected annually and reported to the education committees of the
7 legislature by January 10, 2025, and biennially thereafter.

8 (3) (a) At least annually, school districts shall examine data on
9 student groups participating in and completing each graduation
10 pathway option offered by the school district. At a minimum, the data
11 on graduation pathway participation and completion must be
12 disaggregated by the student groups described in RCW 28A.300.042 (1)
13 and (3), and by:

14 (i) Gender;

15 (ii) Students who are the subject of a dependency proceeding
16 pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW;

17 (iii) Students who are experiencing homelessness as defined in
18 RCW 28A.300.542(4); and

19 (iv) Multilingual/English learners.

20 (b) If the results of the analysis required under (a) of this
21 subsection show disproportionate participation and completion rates
22 by student groups, then the school district shall identify reasons
23 for the observed disproportionality and implement strategies as
24 appropriate to ensure the graduation pathway options are equitably
25 available to all students in the school district.

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