

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 17, 2010  
8:04 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair  
Representative Cathy Engstrom Munoz, Vice Chair  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Wes Keller  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative Robert L. "Bob" Buch  
Representative Berta Gardner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

Eric Fry - Juneau

Michael Husa - Bethel

Jeffrey Hebard - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

HOUSE BILL NO. 206

"An Act establishing a career assessment requirement in public schools; and relating to postsecondary courses for secondary school students."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 206

SHORT TITLE: HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSM'T/POSTSECONDARY CLASS

SPONSOR(s): EDUCATION

03/25/09	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/25/09	(H)	EDC, FIN
03/27/09	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
03/27/09	(H)	Heard & Held
03/27/09	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/03/09	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/03/09	(H)	Heard & Held
04/03/09	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/15/09	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/15/09	(H)	Heard & Held
04/15/09	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
01/20/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
01/20/10	(H)	Heard & Held
01/20/10	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/01/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/01/10	(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard
02/05/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/05/10	(H)	Heard & Held
02/05/10	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/10/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/10/10	(H)	Heard & Held
02/10/10	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/12/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/12/10	(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard
02/15/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/15/10	(H)	Heard & Held
02/15/10	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/19/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/19/10	(H)	Heard & Held
02/19/10	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/22/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/22/10	(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard
03/01/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
03/01/10	(H)	Heard & Held
03/01/10	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/08/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
03/08/10	(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard
03/17/10	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

ERIC FRY, Appointee  
Professional Teaching Practices Commission  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

MICHAEL HUSA, Appointee  
Professional Teaching Practices Commission  
Bethel, Alaska,

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

JEFFREY HEBARD, Appointee  
Professional Teaching Practices Commission  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

EDDY JEANS, Director  
School Finance and Facilities Section  
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 206.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:04:33 AM](#)

**CHAIR PAUL SEATON** called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Present at the call to order were Representatives Seaton, Peggy Wilson, Munoz, Gardner, Buch, Keller, and Edgmon.

[8:04:45 AM](#)

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

[8:04:55 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the committee would first consider the appointment of Eric Fry to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

[8:05:27 AM](#)

ERIC FRY, Appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, informed the committee he was a writer and the Public Information Officer for the Department of Education and Early Development (EED). Mr. Fry indicated that he was not an

educator, but was requested by the commissioner of EED to serve on the commission representing the department. As the department represents the general public, he opined it was appropriate to have a non-educator on the commission. Further, he said he would provide the perspective of a parent of children in the public school system, and has "a personal stake in wanting an ethical teaching core." Mr. Fry recalled his prior experience as a reporter that required him to grasp complex issues and ask meaningful questions. He said he supported the state's ethics rules that insist teachers create a school atmosphere free of intimidation and harassment.

[8:07:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH asked for information on members of the commission.

[8:07:35 AM](#)

MR. FRY said the commission is largely composed of teachers and representatives of the National Education Association (NEA). In further response to Representative Buch, he said he was unsure how many members served on the commission.

[8:08:13 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON recommended that the appointee review the University of Alaska (UA) report to the legislature analyzing teacher preparation and ethical complaints.

[8:09:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked for Mr. Fry's responsibilities as a public information officer.

MR. FRY stated he answers questions from the public, researchers, and interest groups, prepares news releases and other written documents, prepares speeches and white papers, and produces a weekly information report.

[8:10:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ offered her support for the appointee, citing his past work as fair, well-balanced, and professional.

[8:10:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER stated his support.

[8:11:03 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON recalled the primary function of the commission is to investigate and hear ethical complaints against teachers. He encouraged the appointee to forward to the committee, through the commissioner, items of policy that may need legislative support. Chair Seaton expressed his appreciation of Mr. Fry's willingness to serve.

[8:12:47 AM](#)

MICHAEL HUSA, Appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, informed the committee that he has taught in the Lower Kuskokwim School District for 19 years, serves on the NEA board of directors, and has served on the commission for the past three years. He explained that the role of the commission is one of oversight of teacher certification and the ethical applications of teachers and administrators. He expressed his support for teacher and administrator professional oversight within certifications, and of sanctions recommended by the commission when appropriate.

[8:13:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ asked for a description of the process of bringing an ethical complaint to the commission.

MR. HUSA explained that complaints are most often filed by other educators or the district, but parents also have the right to file a complaint. Local districts usually deal with complaints first; however, egregious complaints can come directly to the commission. Complaints are also filed by police officers, the Office of Children's Services, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and students.

[8:15:21 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON restated his recommendation that the commission review, and comment on, the UA report on teacher preparation.

[8:16:46 AM](#)

JEFFREY HEBARD, Appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, informed the committee he was a 20-year teacher in Fairbanks, and has also been on the commission for four years.

Mr. Hebard said serving on the commission was a rewarding experience as the commission works to uphold and enforce the standards and ethics of the teaching profession. Furthermore, his service on the commission is an opportunity to volunteer his time to the profession, the state, and the children of Alaska.

CHAIR SEATON asked for the number of complaints heard by the commission each year.

[8:17:54 AM](#)

MR. HEBARD estimated 100 complaints are initially investigated by staff and reported to the commission. Many are dealt with at the local level; if not, the commission hears the complaint and there may be a voluntary surrender of the teaching certificate and sanctions.

[8:18:44 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether the report is made public, or is treated in a confidential manner.

MR. HEBARD acknowledged there is a "balancing act between confidentiality and then public record." Nevertheless, a sanction becomes part of the public record; in fact, a quarterly newsletter published by the commission discloses sanctions, be they revocations, suspensions, or reprimands.

[8:20:00 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON again encouraged the appointee's review of the UA report on teacher preparation and solicited comment from the commission, particularly if there is legislation that may be helpful.

[8:21:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH asked for the number of people who have been sanctioned during the appointee's term on the commission.

MR. HEBARD pointed out that a formal reprimand from the commission is considered a sanction, as is a voluntary surrender, a suspension of certificate, or a revocation of certificate, and estimated fifteen to twenty people per year garner sanctions. He deferred to the executive director for the exact numbers. In response to a previous inquiry, Mr. Hebard advised that the nine-member commission meets three times per

year and is composed of five teachers, one principal, one superintendent, one representative from EED, and one representative from higher education.

[8:23:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ made a motion that the House Education Standing Committee, having reviewed the qualifications of Eric Fry, Michael Husa, and Jeffrey Hebard for the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, advance the names to a joint session.

[8:23:58 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether there were any objections to the motion. There being none, the names were advanced from the House Education Standing Committee.

[8:24:22 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:24 a.m. to 8:29 a.m.

[8:29:22 AM](#)

**HB 206-HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSM'T/POSTSECONDARY CLASS**

[8:29:23 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 206, "An Act establishing a career assessment requirement in public schools; and relating to postsecondary courses for secondary school students."

[Although not formally stated, HB 206, 26-LS0765\S, Mischel, 4/22/09 was before the committee.]

[8:30:07 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON divided HB 206 into three purposes: (1) WorkKeys as a career preparedness assessment; (2) secondary student enrollment in postsecondary institutions; (3) modifications in school district student count periods. He advised that the three separate issues would be discussed individually in order to determine the merits of each.

[8:32:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER referred to the third issue and stated that after her review of testimony and data, modifications of the count period "missed our mark." The evidence that school districts can control the ebb and flow of enrollment is anecdotal and she said she was not prepared to continue with this segment of the bill.

[8:34:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON agreed with Representative Gardner. She reviewed the various reasons that school counts fluctuate, all of which have nothing to do with what might have been considered a "push-out" problem at one time, and urged the committee to drop that aspect of the bill.

[8:35:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ strongly disagreed with expanding the count period due to the resulting burden on school staff and the unintended consequences to smaller schools.

[8:36:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON joined the chorus in support of eliminating this section of the bill.

[8:37:14 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON agreed that this section of the bill was best deleted; nevertheless, concerns remain about the loss of students throughout the school year. In fact, keeping kids in school is a topic that school districts must identify with the support of legislative policy.

[8:39:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH echoed the thoughts of the committee, and added that many districts have seen improvement in this area, which is encouraging. However, the proposed legislation does not enhance the effort.

[8:40:49 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON recalled the various student count modifications that the committee considered, and stressed that the discussions have merited significant attention from school administrations, which has elevated attention to the problem.

[8:41:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON pointed out one valuable aspect that arose during discussions about the student count period. She reminded the committee that school districts would benefit from using data from the previous year for funding, rather than waiting for the student count in October.

[8:44:13 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON elaborated on the benefits and drawbacks of the aforementioned funding concept.

[8:46:12 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON moved to adopt Conceptual Amendment 2 that deleted Sec. 2 through Sec. 6 of the bill, and deleted "and relating to student counts for school funding purposes." from the title of the bill.

[8:47:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER objected for the purpose of discussion and noted Representative Wilson's comments addressed Sec. 3. Representative Gardner then removed her objection.

[8:47:59 AM](#)

There being no further objection, Conceptual Amendment 2 was adopted.

[8:48:53 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON directed attention to Section 1, page 1, lines 5-14, through page 2, lines 1-14, that required the use of WorkKeys as a career preparedness assessment, and that the highest levels of the assessments would be included on each high school student's transcript. The assessments would serve to inform the employment community of a graduate's skills and would provide incentives for student achievement during the senior year of high school.

[8:50:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ questioned whether WorkKeys was administered in 10th grade.

CHAIR SEATON affirmed that WorkKeys will be required this year for all 11th grade students. However, the bill would require a senior's highest WorkKeys score to be incorporated into his/her high school transcript.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ surmised the bill would require the test to be administered a second time.

[8:51:53 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON deferred the question to Eddy Jeans representing the Department of Education and Early Development (EDD).

[8:52:08 AM](#)

EDDY JEANS, Director, School Finance and Facilities Section, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), in response to Chair Seaton, advised that the current requirement calls for the WorkKeys assessment to be administered in 11th grade.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ restated her question.

MR. JEANS said HB 206 would require that all districts provide the assessment to students in 12th grade; however, the State Board of Education & Early Development would reevaluate its decision to require the assessment in 11th grade.

[8:53:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON opined the assessment is of more value when given earlier, before 11th or 12th grade, in order to help students plan an educational course, although if given in 12th grade, a future employer could see what a student has accomplished.

[8:55:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH asked for the impact on the department if assessments were required by regulation in 11th grade, and by statute in 12th grade.

MR. JEANS observed with the passage of the proposed bill, the assessment would be required in 12th grade and he was unsure what the state board's position would be on the 11th grade assessment. In response to Representative Wilson, he said a program aligned with WorkKeys, the Worldwide Interactive Network

(WIN) courseware assessment, is required in 8th grade, and exposes students to a similar assessment process. Although the state board may eliminate the 11th grade assessment in response to the proposed legislation, the system is in place to expose students to assessments so they can take additional coursework to improve their skills.

[8:56:58 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON referred to Section 1, page 2, lines 8-12 which read [original punctuation provided]:

(3) provide a report to each student on the results of the student's assessment, based on nationally recognized criteria for evaluation a student's preparedness to make the transition to work or college; and

(4) provide to the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education information needed to determine a student's eligibility for financial assistance.

CHAIR SEATON noted that the above language establishes a meaningful assessment "for those 70 percent of students in our schools that are not going to college." In fact, student assessment is of vital state interest to prepare students for career readiness, and to make the high school diploma and transcript meaningful to employers. Although that was the intention of the high school exit exam, an assessment more completely shows a student's level of accomplishment. He noted that the WorkKeys program was not specified in the bill, thus allowing the state board to choose the assessment required by the legislation.

[9:00:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON agreed with Representative Wilson's comment that providing the assessment in 11th grade would be more beneficial to the student. However, indications are the earlier assessment would be eliminated if the bill requiring the assessment in 12th grade becomes law. He reminded the committee of the high standards set by the Governor's Performance Scholarship (GPS) program, and other ongoing efforts towards education reform, and opined delaying the assessment to 12th grade does not "serve our purpose in asking students to achieve ... more."

[9:01:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked whether the WIN program was similar to WorkKeys.

MR. JEANS said yes, and added that the two programs are aligned and test similar abilities. However, at the conclusion of WorkKeys, a student's skill levels are indicated on a nationally recognized certificate.

[9:02:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked whether all schools provide the WIN test in 8th grade, and if the results are available to the student in later years.

MR. JEANS stated that all schools are required to provide the WIN assessment in the 8th grade. The assessments are used immediately to guide students to careers, and to improve the skills necessary for those who have chosen careers. Existing regulations have already established an assessment process; the proposed legislation moves the final assessment to 12th grade and requires the department to incorporate the results on high school transcripts.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON restated her question about whether students can review the assessments for self improvement.

MR. JEANS said he would confirm whether assessments are kept with permanent records and the regulations concerning student access to his/her records. He assured the committee school district staff are trained to engage the students in the assessment process early-on.

[9:06:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON asked whether the WIN assessment would be helpful to a student interested in qualifying for a GPS.

MR. JEANS said absolutely. In fact, the proposed GPS legislation refers to career assessment and the WIN scores would expose "their areas of weakness, that they would need to work on."

[9:07:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ urged the committee to work more closely with the state board in order to avoid the duplication of efforts and requirements, and to maximize opportunities in coordination with the GPS program. She said, "I kind of feel like we're getting ahead of ourselves with this provision ... I'm a little bit uncomfortable with where we're going here."

[9:08:30 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON reminded the committee the reason the proposed bill called for the assessment in the 12th grade, and its inclusion in transcripts was so students would have impetus for continuous improvement through their senior year.

[9:09:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER agreed and recalled discussion recognizing that the high school graduation qualifying exam does not serve its purpose and has an unintended adverse consequence for some students. She advised having the final assessment in 12th grade make sense because the 8th grade assessment enables a student to make general plans toward higher education, with the assistance of school staff. Representative Gardner then directed attention to page 2, line [1], and read [original punctuation provided]:

(c) Subject to the availability of appropriations, the department shall

(1) obtain a license that enables school districts to administer the assessment described in (b) of this section with no charge assessed to the district by the vendor of the assessment;

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER surmised students are allowed to take the assessment multiple times, with the culmination in 12th grade.

[9:11:41 AM](#)

MR. JEANS confirmed that students can take WorkKeys many times, but the department encourages students to repeat the WIN assessment as it is cheaper.

[9:12:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER, addressing an earlier statement, clarified that the legislature sets state policy for education,

and the state board implements that policy, thus, the committee can "do what we think is right."

[9:12:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH related a personal experience regarding students and their senior year at high school. He stressed the importance of a focus as an incentive for a student's final year. He expressed support for the initial intent of the provision in the bill, and the incentives in place throughout school years, but "there has to be a way, where ... we create a doorway that they have to go through."

[9:14:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON restated the importance of having the WIN assessment in students' records and available to teachers from 8th grade on. Further, in order for the final 12th grade assessments to be useful, prospective employers will need to be aware of the assessments and the meaning of the certificates. The value of the assessments depends on the school's continuing use of the results to guide and support a student toward an education goal.

MR. JEANS reviewed the regulations and stated that the WIN assessment is given in the 6th and 8th grades, and can be taken as often as desired.

[9:18:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON maintained his objection to adopting this section of the bill as he was unprepared to "supersede the judgment of the department and the board of education at this point." In addition, he expressed his concerns about the fiscal implications of the proposed legislation that require the department to obtain financing each year for programs lacking a clear-cut vision.

[9:20:29 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON referred to the proposed GPS legislation and pointed out that the educational requirements of that program are voluntary and optional on the part of the student. However, HB 206 attempts to establish in state policy a requirement for assessment. Furthermore, the technical track provides for no discrimination above a 2.5 grade point average (GPA), therefore,

performance above that is only tied to the WorkKeys certificate in the transcript. Chair Seaton remarked:

If we want to say that there is going to be significance to the high school diploma, and there's a way in which we can look at, in the future, saying that the high school qualifying exam is really a duplicate of something that is more directly addressed with this assessment, I think that we need to have some assessment, because otherwise we're just removing any assessment for the high school diploma.

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER agreed. She added that providing the WorkKeys assessment on a graduate's transcript for the benefit of a future employer does not have the "high stakes" of the high school qualifying exam, which denies high school graduation to those who do not pass.

CHAIR SEATON acknowledged that the assessment and the exam are not equal; nevertheless, the assessment would provide a tool to evaluate the meaning of a diploma that the employment community can interpret.

[9:24:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON moved to adopt Amendment 3 which read:

Delete

Page 1, lines 5-14, through page 2, lines 1-14

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER objected.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Munoz, Edgmon, and Keller voted in favor of Amendment 3. Representatives Buch, Gardner, Wilson, and Seaton voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 3 failed by a vote of 3-4.

CHAIR SEATON called attention to page 2, lines 15-26, related to secondary student enrollment in postsecondary institutions for students who have passed the high school exit exam. He referred to a memo in the committee packet from Legal and Research Services, Legislative Affairs Agency, dated 3/3/10, and explained that the memo was in response to the question of whether the bill affects the teacher contract of a teacher who is voluntarily teaching a dual credit course. The response was that the bill does not appear to affect payments made to public

high school teachers, but school districts may have specific contract conditions.

[9:28:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON moved to adopt Conceptual Amendment 4, that would change the title of the bill and add a new section to repeal the high school exit exam.

CHAIR SEATON asked Representative Wilson to withdraw her motion.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON withdrew Conceptual Amendment 4.

[9:29:37 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON called attention to a chart in the committee packet titled, "2010 College Credit Inquiry," dated 2/26/10, and asked the department for an explanation thereof.

MR. JEANS explained that EED surveyed school districts to establish which are currently offering dual credits. Listed were five small and remote school districts that do not offer dual credit or university level courses: Aleutian Region; Chatham; Kake; Tanana; Yakutat. The chart also indicated who pays for the credits offered and whether there is a reduced or negotiated rate.

[9:30:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER offered Conceptual Amendment 5 which read:

Delete

Page 2, lines 24-26

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER explained that the language regarding the fees for postsecondary courses was confusing. Furthermore, the aforementioned chart indicated that 70 percent of the districts that offer dual credit courses pay all or part of the fee, and 57 percent have negotiated rates for credits. She opined the legislature does not have to require school districts to pay the fees, as they already do so.

[9:32:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER, at the request of Chair Seaton, withdrew Conceptual Amendment 5.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER suggested the removal of the entire section related to enrollment in postsecondary institutions, as the section is totally unnecessary.

CHAIR SEATON agreed.

[9:33:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ opined placing a requirement for the fees in statute may require the state to cover the cost of the courses.

CHAIR SEATON disagreed.

[9:34:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON moved to adopt Conceptual Amendment 6 which read:

Delete  
Page 2, lines 15-26

[9:34:47 AM](#)

There being no objection, Conceptual Amendment 6 was adopted.

[9:35:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON referred back to Section 1, and asked for comment from EED on the fiscal implication of this section.

MR. JEANS advised that a fiscal note attached to the bill would be zero, because the actions required by the section are already required by department regulation.

[9:36:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON surmised the 11th grade assessment would be eliminated.

MR. JEANS agreed, and explained that the WorkKeys assessment would be administered once per student. In further response to Representative Edgmon, he said, "Actually, this section of legislation almost mirrors our regulation, with the exception it's at 12th grade, instead of 11th."

[9:37:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON questioned whether the state board would favor scheduling the assessment during 11th or 12th grade.

MR. JEANS maintained his belief that, with the passage of this bill, the department would recommend dropping the 11th grade WorkKeys assessment.

[9:38:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON asked for the state board's reason to assess in 11th, rather than 12th grade.

MR. JEANS advised that the regulation allows for a student to retake the exam, increase his/her scores, and have the new scores placed on his/her transcript.

[9:39:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON maintained his objection to moving the assessment to the 12th grade, although he expressed interest in hearing additional testimony in support of the change.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER concurred.

[9:40:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH asked whether the legislation prevents a student from taking the WorkKeys assessment prior to 12th grade.

MR. JEANS said no; however, the department would encourage a student to take the WIN assessment as it is less expensive to administer, and provides the same information. In further response to Representative Buch, he confirmed that the significant difference between WorkKeys and WIN is the issuance of the WorkKeys certificate and the entry of scores in transcripts.

[9:42:21 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether a prospective employer would be provided with access to a student's records or to his/her transcripts.

MR. JEANS said he was unsure and would provide that information to the committee.

[9:43:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH noted employers review high school transcripts and general education development (GED) certificates.

CHAIR SEATON indicated that the department would clarify this and other issues.

[9:45:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON moved Conceptual Amendment 7 that would change the title of the bill, and add a new section to remove the high school exit exam.

[9:45:49 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON reminded the committee of its efforts to promote policy that keeps kids in school until graduation, especially for those interested in the military because a diploma is required. However, the committee has heard testimony that if a student cannot pass the exam, he/she drops out of school. She praised recent positive programs that are being put in place, such as WorkKeys and the GPS program, and opined the exit exam does not accomplish its purpose.

[9:47:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER agreed that the exit exam falls short; however, the exam is perceived as an accountability measure, and he said he could not support the amendment.

CHAIR SEATON observed that the bill puts in place a substitution for the exit exam in the form of the assessment. He offered a friendly amendment that would delay the removal of the exit exam to allow sufficient time in order for the department to implement the WorkKeys assessment. He then asked for an estimate of the time required to remove the exit exam and implement WorkKeys.

[9:51:01 AM](#)

MR. JEANS related that under the current assessment contract, the high stakes component is integrated into the 10th grade assessment. Thus, this component would remain in the assessment process, but would not restrict a student from receiving a diploma. He further advised that WorkKeys will be administered to each 11th grade student next year, so "move it out a year."

[9:51:57 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether Representative Peggy Wilson would accept a friendly amendment to delay action, identified as Amendment 1 to Conceptual Amendment 7.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON suggested the committee vote.

[9:52:35 AM](#)

MR. JEANS observed that removing the high stakes component of the exit exam would not be difficult and could happen immediately. Although the department would not adjust its assessment process, the results from the exit exam would not have the high stakes nature for students who do not pass, and would not be reported. He concluded the high stakes component could be repealed immediately.

[9:53:11 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON withdrew Amendment 1 to Conceptual Amendment 7.

[9:53:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON asked for the department's response to Conceptual Amendment 7.

MR. JEANS acknowledged that the department and the state board have had this discussion, and the state board is in support of retaining the high school qualifying exam until it can be appropriately replaced. As WorkKeys is informational, it is not an appropriate replacement. The high stakes exam maintains pressure on school districts to evaluate students' progress through standards-based assessment, and to help students pass the exam.

[9:54:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER expressed her understanding that the intent of the high stakes element was to ensure that a diploma

means more than attendance and minimal class requirements. In addition, a meaningful diploma ensures that graduates, the community, and employers know the skills that have been mastered; however, this information and more would now be available on the WorkKeys assessment incorporated into the graduate's transcript. Therefore, there is no reason for the exit exam and she stated her support for the amendment.

[9:56:07 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON heard the majority opinion was that the high stakes component was a detriment, and not an aid, to student achievement; however, the legislature must make this policy call.

[9:57:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON called for the question.

[9:58:00 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON restated Conceptual Amendment 7 would remove the high stakes nature of the high school graduation qualifying exam.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Gardner, Munoz, Peggy Wilson, Edgmon, and Seaton voted in favor of Conceptual Amendment 7. Representatives Keller and Buch voted against it. Therefore, Conceptual Amendment 7 was adopted by a vote of 5-2.

[9:58:07 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced HB 206 was held.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:58 a.m.