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**SENATE BILL 5498**

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AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2022 Regular Session

**State of Washington                      67th Legislature                      2022 Regular Session**

**By** Senators C. Wilson, Billig, Das, Lovelett, Lovick, Nobles, Wagoner, and Wellman

Prefiled 12/07/21. Read first time 01/10/22. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to posthumous high school diplomas; amending RCW  
2 28A.230.120; and creating new sections.

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

4            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**    (1) The legislature affirms its statutory  
5 assertion that the purpose of a high school diploma is to declare  
6 that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education,  
7 gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills  
8 to be a lifelong learner.

9            (2) The legislature finds that, on rare occasions and due to  
10 unforeseen circumstances, school districts may wish to provide  
11 recognition of a student's status of being on-track to graduate,  
12 which is interrupted by an untimely passing that prevents the  
13 completion of the secondary education program. In these limited  
14 instances, school districts should have discretion to issue a  
15 posthumous high school diploma with an "honoris causa" inscription.

16            (3) The legislature recognizes that the authority to issue a high  
17 school diploma properly rests with the local school district and its  
18 determination of whether a student has met the applicable state and  
19 local graduation requirements. The legislature finds, however, that  
20 establishing uniform requirements governing the issuance of

1 posthumous diplomas by school districts will promote the proper and  
2 effective administration of the public education system.

3 (4) The legislature, therefore, intends to authorize school  
4 districts to issue posthumous high school diplomas for qualifying  
5 students and in accordance with delineated requirements that promote  
6 local discretion, consistent administration, and the acknowledgment  
7 of academic achievements that were prematurely interrupted by the  
8 student's untimely passing.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.230.120 and 2008 c 185 s 1 are each amended to  
10 read as follows:

11 (1) School districts shall issue diplomas to students signifying  
12 graduation from high school upon the students' satisfactory  
13 completion of all local and state graduation requirements. Districts  
14 shall grant students the option of receiving a final transcript in  
15 addition to the regular diploma.

16 (2) School districts or schools of attendance shall establish  
17 policies and procedures to notify senior students of the transcript  
18 option and shall direct students to indicate their decisions in a  
19 timely manner. School districts shall make appropriate provisions to  
20 assure that students who choose to receive a copy of their final  
21 transcript shall receive such transcript after graduation.

22 (3)(a) A school district may issue a high school diploma to a  
23 person who:

24 (i) Is an honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the  
25 United States; and

26 (ii) Left high school before graduation to serve in World War II,  
27 the Korean conflict, or the Vietnam era as defined in RCW 41.04.005.

28 (b) A school district may issue a diploma to or on behalf of a  
29 person otherwise eligible under (a) of this subsection  
30 notwithstanding the fact that the person holds a high school  
31 equivalency certification or is deceased.

32 (c) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt a form  
33 for a diploma application to be used by a veteran or a person acting  
34 on behalf of a deceased veteran under this subsection (3). The  
35 superintendent of public instruction shall specify what constitutes  
36 acceptable evidence of eligibility for a diploma.

37 (4)(a) A school district, at the request of the parent, guardian,  
38 or custodian, may issue a posthumous high school diploma for a  
39 deceased student if the student:

1       (i) Was enrolled in a public school of the district at the time  
2 of death;  
3       (ii) Was deemed on-track for graduation before the time of death;  
4 and  
5       (iii) Died after matriculating into high school.  
6       (b) A high school diploma issued under this subsection (4) must  
7 bear the inscription "honoris causa" and may not be issued before the  
8 graduation date of the class in which the student was enrolled.  
9       (c) Nothing in this subsection (4):  
10       (i) Obligates school districts to award a diploma for a deceased  
11 student at the same ceremony or event as other graduating students;  
12 or  
13       (ii) Limits the retroactive issuance of a high school diploma.  
14       (d) Diplomas issued under this subsection (4) may not be applied  
15 toward student graduation counts or for any other purpose of federal  
16 and state accountability data collection.

17       NEW SECTION.       **Sec. 3.**       This act may be known and cited as  
18 Evitan's law.

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