
Education Committee

ESSB 5449

Brief Description: Regarding establishing and meeting graduation and reengagement goals.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Hobbs, McDermott, Oemig, Jarrett and Kohl-Welles).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Establishes graduation and re-engagement goals for the year 2020.
- Directs the State Board of Education (SBE) to establish annual targets for schools and school districts in order to meet the goals.
- Requires the SBE, in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), to make recommendations to the Legislature on a focused assistance program and incentives for school districts to improve graduation rates.
- Requires entities with appointed representatives on the Building Bridges work group to collaborate with other state agencies and organizations to meet state graduation rate goals and help reduce the dropout rate.

Hearing Date: 3/18/09

Staff: Cece Clynych (786-7195)

Background:

Pursuant to its authority to establish accountability measures, the State Board of Education (SBE) has, by rule, established school and school district high school graduation rate goals. Under the SBE's rule, each high school must reach a graduation rate goal of 70 percent in 2009. This rate must increase by 3 percentage point increments per year through 2013, reaching an 85 percent rate by 2014.

In 2007 the Legislature directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to create a grant program, known as the Building Bridges Program, to begin the phase-in of a statewide comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval system. A state-level

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work group was tasked with assisting and enhancing the work of the grantees. In December 2008 the work group recommended to the Legislature that the state should set statutory goals and targets for: (1) the percentage of students that will graduate from high school; and (2) the percentage of youth who have dropped out but will re-engage in education.

Pursuant to new federal regulations, a state must set a single graduation rate goal that all high schools must meet and annual graduation rate targets that reflect continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year toward meeting or exceeding the graduation rate goal. Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, schools and the state must meet or exceed either the graduation rate goal or the state's targets for continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year.

Summary of Bill:

Graduation and Re-engagement Goals.

The following graduation and re-engagement goals are set in statute:

- By 2020, 95 percent of students must graduate from high school in four years.
- By 2020, 60 percent of youth who have dropped out of school must be reengaged in education and be college and work ready.

State Board of Education.

The SBE is charged with establishing annual graduation rate targets for schools and school districts in order to meet the graduation goals by 2020. These targets must reflect continuous and substantial improvement from prior years and ensure that adequate progress is made by low-income and minority students. The SBE is also directed to establish annual targets for re-engaging youth who have dropped out.

In consultation with the OSPI, the SBE is required to make recommendations to the Legislature on a focused assistance program and incentives for school districts to improve graduation rates. These recommendations are due by December 1, 2009.

Collaboration to Meet Goals.

The following entities, all of which are represented on the Building Bridges work group, must collaborate with other state agencies and organizations to meet state graduation rate goals and help reduce the dropout rate:

- Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Employment Security Department
- Department of Community Trade and Economic Development
- Department of Health
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Family Policy Council

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available for substitute bill.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.