

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6403

As Passed House - Amended:

March 3, 2010

Title: An act relating to accountability and support for vulnerable students and dropouts, including prevention, intervention, and reengagement.

Brief Description: Regarding accountability and support for vulnerable students and dropouts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kauffman, McAuliffe, Hargrove, Hobbs, Regala, Oemig, McDermott and Shin; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/17/10, 2/23/10 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/10, 96-1.

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Recognizes the financial cost of dropouts and the need for the development of a collaborative infrastructure at the local, regional, and state levels between systems that serve vulnerable students.
- Expands the Building Bridges workgroup.
- Tasks state agency work group members to work together on various activities to support school/family/community partnerships engaged in building K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement systems.
- Adds definitions and several new reporting requirements.
- Requires the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to calculate an annual estimate of the savings resulting from annual changes in the extended graduation rate and requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to include this estimate in its annual dropout and graduation report.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Maxwell, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Fagan, Hunt, Johnson, Lias, Orwall, Probst, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Cece Lynch (786-7195).

Background:

The overall graduation rate in Washington and in the nation is around 70 percent, according to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). The 2007 report entitled *The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children*, calculates the benefit to taxpayers of a prevented dropout, over the adult working lifetime of the individual, at a present value of approximately \$236,000 in 2009 dollars. This represents a savings of public expense of approximately \$10,500 per year for each such individual.

In 2007 a statutory framework for a statewide comprehensive drop-out prevention, intervention, and retrieval system was put in place. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) was directed to create a grant program, known as the Building Bridges Program, to begin the phase-in of this statewide comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval system. A state-level work group, the Building Bridges workgroup (workgroup), was tasked with assisting and enhancing the work of the grantees.

The Quality Education Council (QEC) was created in 2009 to recommend and inform the ongoing legislative implementation of a program of basic education and necessary financing. The QEC is composed of eight legislative members, and one representative each from the Office of the Governor, the OSPI, the State Board of Education (SBE), the Professional Educators Standards Board, and the Department of Early Learning (DEL).

The Legislature has directed the establishment of a comprehensive K-12 education data improvement system for financial, student, and educator data. Among the required elements is a subset of student information elements to serve as a dropout early warning system.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Findings/Intent

Facilitating the development of a collaborative infrastructure at the local, regional, and state levels between systems that serve vulnerable students is the stated intent of this OSPI-request legislation. Specific findings explain the underlying purpose and intent are:

- the annual financial savings that can be realized by preventing high school dropouts;
- school districts' need for both accountability and technical assistance to improve graduation rates;
- the need for adequate dropout prevention, intervention, and re-engagement systems to prevent vulnerable students from dropping out; and
- school districts' need for support in the local community to prevent dropouts.

Definition Section Added.

Several new terms are defined in statute:

1. "Critical community members" means representatives in the local community from student/parent organizations, parents and families, local government, law enforcement, juvenile corrections, any tribal organization in the local school district, the local health district, non-profit and social service organizations serving youth, and faith organizations.
2. "Dropout early warning and intervention data system" means a student information system that provides the data needed to conduct a universal screening to identify students at risk of dropping out, catalog student interventions, and monitor student progress towards graduation.
3. "K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and re-engagement system" means a system that provides *all* of the following functions:
 - engaging in school improvement planning;
 - providing prevention activities;
 - identifying vulnerable students based on a dropout early warning and intervention data system;
 - timely academic and non-academic group and individual interventions for vulnerable students based on a response to intervention models;
 - providing graduation coaches, mentors, and/or case managers for vulnerable students identified as needing a more intensive one-on-one adult relationship;
 - establishing and providing staff to coordinate a school/family/community partnership that assists in building a K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and re-engagement system;
 - providing retrieval or reentry activities; and
 - providing alternative educational programming.
4. "School/family/community partnership" means a partnership between a school or schools, families, and the community that engages critical community members in a formal, structured partnership with local school districts in a coordinated effort to provide comprehensive support services and improve outcomes for vulnerable youth.
5. "Vulnerable students" are defined as students who are in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system, receiving special education services, recent immigrants, homeless, emotionally traumatized, or who are facing behavioral health issues, as well as students deemed at-risk of school failure as identified by a dropout early warning data system or other assessment.

Recommendations Required Regarding Technical Assistance for Districts.

In collaboration with the workgroup, the OSPI must develop and report recommendations for the development of a comprehensive, K-12 dropout prevention initiative designed to integrate many tiers of prevention, intervention, and technical assistance provided through federal and state programs. These recommendations are due to the QEC and the Legislature by September 15, 2010.

Additions to the Building Bridges Workgroup.

Composition of the workgroup is changed to add representatives from the DEL, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the community mobilization office. The divisions within the Department of Social and Health Services that must be represented on the workgroup are specifically listed: Children's Services and Behavioral Health and

Recovery. Representatives from the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee and the Office of the Education Ombudsman should be included.

It remains the OSPI's responsibility to establish the workgroup. In addition, the OSPI is to appoint its own representative to the workgroup.

State Agency Members of the Workgroup Must Work Together.

The various state agencies represented on the workgroup must work together, wherever feasible, to:

- provide opportunities for coordination and flexibility of program eligibility and funding criteria;
- provide joint funding;
- develop protocols and templates for model agreements on sharing records and data; and
- provide joint profession development opportunities regarding research-based practices, the availability of programs and services for vulnerable youth, and cultural competence.

New Workgroup Reporting Requirements Added.

The annual report to the Legislature and the Governor that is currently required of the Building Bridges work group must also be provided to the QEC and must include proposed strategies for building dropout prevention, intervention, and re-engagement systems in local communities.

In addition, by September 15, 2010, the workgroup must report to the QEC, the Legislature, and the Governor on:

- recommended state goals and annual targets for the percentage of students graduating from high school;
- recommended state goals and annual targets for the percentage of youth who have dropped out who should be re-engaged;
- recommended funding for career guidance and dropout prevention and intervention systems and a plan for phasing the funding into the program of basic education beginning in the 2011-2013 biennium; and
- a plan for phasing in the expansion of the current school improvement planning program to include state-funded technical assistance for districts in significant need of improvement regarding high school graduation rates.

By December 1, 2010 new recommendations from the workgroup are due to the Legislature and the Governor regarding a state-level and regional infrastructure for coordinating services for vulnerable youth. These recommendations must address:

- whether to adopt an official conceptual framework for all entities that can support coordinated planning and evaluation;
- creation of a performance-based management system;
- development of regional and county multi-partner youth consortia to assist in building comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and re-engagement systems;
- development of a school-based one-stop shop to provide individualized attention, establish protocols for coordinating data and services, and build a system of single case managers across agencies;

- launching a statewide media campaign; and
- development of a statewide database of available services for vulnerable youth.

Calculation and Reporting of Savings Resulting from Changes in Extended Graduation Rate.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) must calculate an annual estimate of the savings resulting from any change compared to the prior school year in the extended graduation rate. The OSPI must include this estimate in an appendix to its annual dropout and graduation report.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The workgroup has done a tremendous amount of work to identify best practices in dropout prevention and intervention. They put together recommendations, but due to the budget many cannot be implemented at this time. This bill provides for improved collaboration among state agencies and the QEC. A collaborative approach will be much more successful in keeping students in school. We need to look not only at intervention but also prevention, and a state action plan will be a good step in that direction.

Mason County has been successful in blending state, federal, and local funds to build a comprehensive system for prevention and intervention, but it has taken a concerted grassroots effort to pull together more than 50 state-funded programs into something other than a "spaghetti" model of services. Coordination comes more at a personal level when people know each other. The bill attempts to institutionalize coordination at a state level from the top down. This will result in a better return for taxpayers and better utilization of limited resources.

There is a critical economic need to improve student graduation rates. What does this bill actually accomplish? It is analogous to the Basic Education bill from 2009 in that it defines desired outcomes and sets up a framework and a planning process for how to put the pieces together to accomplish them and how to fund them.

Addressing dropouts is critical to our state. Too many students are pushed out of the education system. More than two-thirds of students with disabilities have no cognitive issues, but we still lose them as dropouts. There is one good four-letter word, and that is "plan." This is the type of plan that we need and we need it to move forward. Nothing else is worth doing if we cannot do anything for our most vulnerable students.

The dropout issue is complex. There is no silver bullet and no single strategy to solve it. The components of the bill are consistent with what Building Bridges grantees have been doing successfully in the field, and consistent with evaluations of those programs. Academic support is important, but schools cannot solve the dropout problem alone or in isolation.

These are students who are served by multiple parts of the education and social service system, each of which operates in silos. This provides a strong foundation and a systematic framework to build a long-term state strategy that can be implemented to address the dropout problem. Superintendent Dorn is in full support of this legislation; he has a clear goal to lower the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate of students.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Kimberly Klint, Mason Matter's; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Board; Annie Blackledge and Tom Lopp, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.