

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5343

As of February 21, 2019

Title: An act relating to facilitating high school success.

Brief Description: Facilitating high school success.

Sponsors: Senators Mullet, Rivers, Palumbo, Hobbs, Salomon and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/15/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies academic acceleration policy requirements and requires all districts to adopt an academic acceleration policy by the 2021-22 school year.
- Allows dual credit enrollment for any student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course or program.
- Requires districts to automatically enroll students in dual credit courses who meet the state standard on the high school English language arts or mathematics assessments.
- Increases the allocation to middle school guidance counselors under the state prototypical school allocation model.
- Allows districts to use Learning Assistance Program funds on student interventions in their early warning and dropout prevention system.
- Adds additional requirements and supports for dropout prevention systems.
- Requires all middle schools and high schools to implement a comprehensive guidance and planning program for all students.
- Requires districts to use the K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system to inform updates to students' high school and beyond plan.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

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.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Academic Acceleration Policies. School districts in Washington are encouraged to adopt an academic acceleration policy for high school students. School districts must notify students and parents of the academic policy and advance courses available to student. Students must be allowed to opt out of the academic acceleration policy. Under academic acceleration policies:

- districts automatically enroll students who meet state standards on statewide assessments in the next most rigorous level of advanced courses or programs offered by the student's high school; and
- students who successfully complete an advanced course are then enrolled in the next most rigorous course, with the eventual goal of being enrolled in a course offering the opportunity to earn dual credit from both the high school and a college.

The subject matter of the advanced course depends on the subject in which the student attained the state standard. Students who meet state standards in both reading and writing are eligible for enrollment in advanced courses in English, social studies, humanities, and other related subjects.

Dual Credit Courses and Programs. Students may simultaneously earn high school and college-level credit by successfully completing a dual-credit course or passing certain standardized examinations. Examples of dual credit courses include Advanced Placement (AP), Running Start, and College in the High School. To be eligible to participate in many of the dual credit courses students must be in grades 11 or 12, although College in the High School accepts students in grades 10, 11, and 12.

Dropout Prevention Systems. A dropout early warning and intervention data system (DEWIS) is defined in law as 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.

A K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system is defined in state law as a system that provides, among other things, dropout prevention activities, identifying vulnerable students using a DEWIS, group and individual interventions for vulnerable students, providing graduation coaches/mentors, and alternative educational programming.

The Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol. The Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol (Protocol) was developed by the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Protocol facilitates the ability of any academic or nonacademic provider to support the needs of at-risk students, including, but not limited to out-of-school providers, social workers, mental health counselors, physicians, dentists, speech therapists, and audiologists.

High School and Beyond Plan. As established in ESHB 2224 (2014), all high school students must have a high school and beyond plan (HSBP). Each HSBP must be initiated in seventh- or eighth-grade with a career interest and skills inventory. The plan must be updated to reflect high school assessment results, and must identify available interventions and academic support for students who have not met the high school graduation standard.

All plans must include, among other items, an identification of career and educational goals, identification of dual credit opportunities, and a four-year plan for course taking. Decisions on whether a student has met HSBP requirements are made at the local level.

Summary of Bill: Academic Acceleration Policy. By the 2021-22 school year, each school district must adopt an academic acceleration policy for high school students. Under this policy, districts must automatically enroll students who meet the state standard in English language arts or math assessments in the next most rigorous level of advanced courses or program offered by the high school. Schools must also automatically enroll students who meet the career and college readiness benchmarks on the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test.

Students who meet these standards are also eligible for enrollment in advanced courses in the respective subject areas. In addition, each school district must enroll any student in a dual credit course or program who wants to enroll in that course or program.

Dropout Prevention Programs. School districts may expend a portion of the district's LAP allocation on interventions for students identified at risk of not graduating using the DEWIS. The DEWIS must also track real-time data on attendance, behavior, and course performance, and must include user-friendly data displays. Teachers must enter grades on a regular and timely basis for monitoring student progress.

A K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system must prioritize school-wide tier one preventions and interventions, and must include establishing success teams of teachers, counselors, other staff, and family involvement coordinators. A system must also assign a specific staff member for each vulnerable student who is off track as the adult responsible for engaging with the student and the student's family and monitoring progress. In addition, a system of this type also shall include ongoing professional development for staff.

By the 2021-22 school year, each school district must use a DEWIS to identify students who are at risk of not graduating from high school, beginning with students in grade five or earlier. Each school district must also have a K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system in place for students in the first year of middle school and the first year of high school. Districts must implement these systems as soon as applicable for these grades, and are encouraged to use the needs assessment from the Protocol. School districts must submit a report to OSPI every two years on these programs, and OSPI shall allocate funds to support developing and maintaining these programs.

Guidance Counseling. Funding for middle school guidance counselors under the prototypical school model is increased from 1.216 to 1.728. In addition, funds for guidance counselors must be expended on comprehensive guidance and planning programs. These programs, in addition to current requirements, must also contain support for high school students in developing academic skills, selecting the best possible postsecondary option, and mental health, emotional, and social support services.

School districts must annually submit to OSPI, evidence they are meeting the requirements of a comprehensive guidance and planning program.

High School and Beyond Plans. Districts must use the K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system to inform updates to the high school and beyond plan for students in their first year of high school.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 4, 2019.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The bill is an attempt to implement successful local programs at a statewide level. Academic acceleration can lead to more students of diverse backgrounds entering into advanced courses. The bill would allow better supports and infrastructure for students to succeed. The practices in the bill has helped students stay on track and graduate from high school. Starting interventions in middle school is important to support students. Automatic enrollment in dual credit classes have increased enrollment in these courses. High school and beyond plans need to be strengthened to align with student pathways. More counselor support will help students find pathways that align with their goals. Items in the bill will positively affect members of all socioeconomic groups. Opportunity gaps still exist even after much work; the bill would help students of color reach benchmarks and reduce gaps in dual credit courses.

CON: Not every school may be ready to enroll more students in dual credit courses. Many of the issues in the bill could be addressed by providing more resources, not more requirements on staff.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mark Mullet, Prime Sponsor; Katherine Mahoney, OSPI; Juliette Kelly, College Success Foundation; April Shine, Graduate Tacoma; Libuse Binder, Stand For Children; Steve Smith, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; Jessica Hanson, Student, District 81; Irene Zoesch, citizen; Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable; Kaaren Heikes, Washington State Board of Education.

CON: Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.