

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5379

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As of February 2, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to providing services and supports to parenting minors to improve educational attainment.

**Brief Description:** Providing services and supports to parenting minors to improve educational attainment.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wilson, C., Nguyen, Saldaña, Darneille, Das, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser and Zeiger.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/28/19.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows minors who are parents to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families regardless of the income and resources of the parent or guardian of the minor parent.
- Requires authorization for full-day Working Connections Child Care during the school year for a minor parent when certain requirements are met.
- Creates a grant program to help school districts establish a Graduation, Reality, and Dual-Role Skills program.
- Requires school districts to provide transportation to students who are transporting their infant.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

**Background:** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) is a federal block grant providing temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for low-income families. To receive TANF, a minor who is pregnant or a parent, and who has not been emancipated by a court, must meet program eligibility requirements including:

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- making satisfactory progress in a training program leading to a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate, unless the minor has an infant less than 12 weeks old living in the home;
- living in a situation approved by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS); and
- having a protective payee set up by the DSHS who manages the cash benefits.

If a minor parent lives with a parent or guardian, the income of the parent or guardian is counted when determining the minor's eligibility. If a minor is applying for benefits separately for themselves and their child, only a portion of the parent or guardian's income is considered when determining financial eligibility.

Working Connections Child Care. Working Connection Child Care (WCCC) is a federally and state-funded program providing child care subsidies to families with an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level—\$51,500 for a family of four. The state pays part of the cost of childcare when a parent is employed, self-employed, or meets the requirements for TANF or WorkFirst programs. The family is responsible for making a copayment to the child care provider based on the family's countable income. The minimum copayment is \$15 a month.

A WCCC applicant or consumer not participating in WorkFirst and who is under twenty-two years of age may be eligible for WCCC benefits for a high school or general educational development (GED) program without a minimum number of employment hours.

Graduation, Reality, and Dual-Role Skills. Graduation, reality, and dual-role skills (GRADS) is a program is for pregnant and parenting students and is currently offered in 23 school districts. The program provides students the opportunity to earn high school credit in a series of courses based on the Work and Family Foundations areas of the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education. Child care is available on-site or in an accessible location. The program is funded in part by the state's per-student Career and Technical Education allocation and WCCC subsidy.

In 2014, the Washington State Department of Health and Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) received a federal grant to address teen pregnancy and requested that the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to conduct an outcome evaluation and benefit-cost analysis of the GRADS program with support from this funding source.

Transportation. A school district may authorize or provide, in whole or part, individual transportation for a student if it is approved by the educational service district superintendent or designee and meets certain requirements.

**Summary of Bill:** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. An applicant is eligible to receive the maximum TANF grant award regardless of the applicant's income if the applicant is under eighteen years of age and:

- has a dependent child or children in the applicant's care;
- has available resources with values that do not exceed the exemption limits;
- is actively progressing towards meeting the education requirements; and

- is otherwise qualified to receive assistance.

If a minor parent applicant lives with a parent or guardian who is not receiving assistance, the income and resources of the parent or guardian of the minor parent applicant may not be considered for the purposes of determining the minor parent applicant's eligibility for assistance. The income and resources of the natural or adoptive parent or stepparent of the applicant's child may not be considered for the purposes of determining the minor parent applicant's eligibility for assistance.

Working Connections Child Care. A parent who is under eighteen years old and attending high school or working toward a GED certificate is eligible to receive WCCC. When determining consumer eligibility and copayment, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) must:

- treat the minor parent as their own household when determining household income;
- authorize full-day subsidized child care during the school year when certain requirements are met; and
- designate children of minor parents as a vulnerable population in need of protective services.

DCYF may not consider the availability of the other biological parent when authorizing care. DCYF may not require a copayment greater than the minimum copayment established by DCYF.

Graduation, Reality, and Dual-Role Skills. Subject to appropriations, OSPI must establish a competitive application process to provide grants to school districts for establishing a GRADS program. Grants must be used for expenses such as salaries and start-up costs associated with opening a child care center located on school premises,

WSIPP must evaluate the effectiveness of these grants. The evaluation must include a cost-benefit analysis and an assessment of student outcomes for GRADS participants. WSIPP must report these outcomes no later than December 1, 2030.

Transportation. By July 1, 2020, at the request of an eligible student, a school district may allow the student to transport his or her infant on a school bus or other student transportation vehicle provided by the district. The infant must be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system as defined in the federal motor vehicle safety standards. When a school district denies this request, it must authorize other arrangements for individual transportation.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 25, 2019.

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

**Effective Date:** The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Parents stay in school when they know their children are safe and close by. This bill reduces barriers minor parents face, which are child care, transportation, and cash assistance, which will improve outcomes. This bill interrupts inter-generational poverty and is a good investment.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Melanie Smith, Wellspring Family Services; Rebecca Wallace, OSPI; Paul Benz, Faith Action network.

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