

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6132

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As of January 28, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to allowing the learning assistance program to support school-wide behavioral health system of supports and interventions.

**Brief Description:** Allowing the learning assistance program to support school-wide behavioral health system of supports and interventions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wellman, Billig, Hunt, Lovelett, Pedersen, Randall, Rolfes, Salomon, Van De Wege and Wilson, C.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/20/20.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) to support school-wide behavioral health system of supports and interventions including social workers, counselors, instructional aides, and other school-based health professionals.
- Requires school districts to expend a portion of LAP funding to address the needs of students in grades K-4 who are deficient in reading or reading readiness skills rather than focus first on these students.

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

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

**Background:** LAP is designed to provide supplemental instruction and services to assist students who are not meeting academic standards and to reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom. A student is eligible for LAP services if they score below grade-level standards in reading, writing, or math using multiple measures of performance.

Current state law provides a list of services and activities that may be supported by LAP including:

- extended learning time opportunities;
- certain professional development for staff;

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- consultant teachers;
- tutoring;
- outreach activities and support for parents; and
- up to 5 percent may be used for development of partnerships with community-based organizations, educational service districts, and other local agencies to deliver academic and nonacademic supports.

School districts must use a practice or strategy on a state menu of best practices and strategies except, in certain circumstances.

School districts implementing LAP must focus first on addressing the needs of students in grades K-4 who are deficient in reading or reading readiness skills to improve reading literacy. An Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction rule provides a district may meet this requirement by ensuring that of the total number of students in grades K-4 served by LAP, approximately 50 percent are students receiving English Language Arts services. A school district may serve a threshold lower than 50 percent if it demonstrates a lesser need through certain data sources.

**Summary of Bill:** The list of services and activities LAP may support is expanded to include a school-wide behavioral health system of supports and interventions for students including social workers, counselors, instructional aides, and other school-based health professionals.

School districts must expend a portion of LAP funding to address the needs of students in grades K-4 who are deficient in reading or reading readiness skills to improve reading literacy rather than focus first on these students.

Outdated language is removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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: This state is experiencing a mental health crisis, and this crisis does not stop at the school doors. Children must feel safe and secure before they can learn. Many children need additional support with social emotional skills and mental health interventions, and these supports should be part of a multi-tiered system of supports. Children who are falling behind in reading may be due to nonacademic challenges. School can benefit from greater flexibility with existing LAP funding to help support behavioral support needs. More funding is also needed for behavioral health supports. These supports will help teachers who are feeling stressed given the challenges they face. Teachers need new tools to help build safe, positive, and welcoming learning environments. Many students experience a mental health disorder each year. Students are temporarily forfeiting

their education, so they can support their friends experiencing a mental health issue and to advocate for more mental health supports.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Heather Byington, North Thurston PS Teacher; Stacey Trimble, Elma SD Teacher; Lorrell Noahr, Washington Education Association; Heidi Bennett, Washington State PTA; Autymn Wilde, State Board of Education; Dave Mastin, OSPI; Virginia Barry, Stand for Children.

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