
SENATE BILL 5859

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Mullet, Salomon, Wilson, C., Nguyen, and Wellman

Read first time 02/07/19. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving high school graduation success by
2 investing in educational mentor programs; adding a new section to
3 chapter 28A.600 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature has established that
6 the purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is
7 ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and
8 citizenship. According to the office of the superintendent of public
9 instruction, one in five high school seniors does not graduate on
10 time. Lack of a high school diploma, or its equivalent, can have
11 lifelong, negative financial, social, and health-related impacts. The
12 legislature recognizes that the benefits of high school graduation
13 are numerous for young people and their communities, and as a result,
14 communities have a shared stake in supporting high school students,
15 especially those from underrepresented populations, in their efforts
16 to graduate from high school.

17 (2)(a) The legislature recognizes that community-based mentoring
18 is an effective strategy for improving high school graduation rates
19 and academic achievement. Mentorships are generally a match between a
20 mentor and one or more mentees, where the mentor provides guidance

1 and support one-on-one or in small groups. Mentors are role models,
2 advisers, and advocates.

3 (b) Mentors who intervene when a student exhibits early warning
4 signs for not completing high school can help the student identify
5 and overcome barriers to academic success. Pairing a young person
6 with a supportive, nonfamily member can significantly and positively
7 affect that young person's path to adulthood. Mentors can provide
8 personal and social support, as well as academic and career guidance.
9 For example, a mentor can guide a student to continue their education
10 past high school in a manner that is most appropriate for the
11 student, thus improving the student's lifelong earning potential.

12 (c) Research indicates that strong mentorship programs can
13 improve academic performance. A mentorship with a committed, caring
14 adult from a student's community can also increase the student's
15 self-confidence, resiliency, and problem solving and conflict
16 resolution skills. In addition, participating in a mentorship program
17 can improve students' attitudes about school attendance and
18 completion, improve their social skills and behavior, strengthen
19 their peer and family relationships, and increase their sense of
20 belonging in school. Thus, mentorships can be transformational
21 experiences that provide students with the skills and knowledge they
22 need for future postsecondary education, gainful employment, and
23 citizenship.

24 (3) The legislature intends to improve high school graduation
25 rates for high school students from underrepresented populations by
26 investing in educational community-based mentorship programs.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.600
28 RCW to read as follows:

29 (1) The educational mentor grant program is created to increase
30 graduation rates for high school students from underrepresented
31 populations by expanding the programs of community-based
32 organizations that match participating students with a committed,
33 caring adult from the student's community.

34 (2)(a) By August 1, 2019, and by August 1st every three years
35 thereafter, the office of the superintendent of public instruction
36 must select, through an application process developed for this
37 purpose, two community-based organizations that meet the requirements
38 of this subsection. A selected organization must:

1 (i) Have demonstrated success in offering a research-based
2 mentorship program that increases high school graduation rates for
3 students from underrepresented populations;

4 (ii) Demonstrate capacity to expand the mentorship program;

5 (iii) Match participating high school students from
6 underrepresented populations with committed, caring adults from the
7 students' communities;

8 (iv) Agree to screen and train adults before matching them with
9 students;

10 (v) Introduce students to a variety of postsecondary school
11 options and ensure that every participating senior has a posthigh
12 school plan for economic stability;

13 (vi) Maintain cash or in-kind donations from private sources; and

14 (vii) Agree to collaborate with the office of the superintendent
15 of public instruction to create the report required under subsection
16 (5) of this section, by, for example, administering a student
17 satisfaction survey.

18 (b) One of the selected organizations must primarily serve
19 students east of the crest of the Cascade mountain range and the
20 other must primarily serve students west of the crest of the Cascade
21 mountain range. One of the selected organizations must primarily
22 serve students from rural areas and the other must primarily serve
23 students from urban or suburban areas.

24 (3)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction
25 must distribute a three-year grant to the selected community-based
26 organizations. Money received by a grant recipient in one year of the
27 program may be retained for use in subsequent years.

28 (b) This grant must be used to expand community-based mentorship
29 programs offered by a grant recipient. A portion of each grant may be
30 used to operate the community-based organization. For the purposes of
31 this section, "expand" means to increase the number of high school
32 students from underrepresented populations in the mentorship program
33 from the number in the program during the school year prior to the
34 awarding of the grant.

35 (4) By November 15, 2019, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036,
36 the office of the superintendent of public instruction must provide a
37 report to the appropriate committees of the legislature that
38 describes the application process developed for the grant program and
39 provides information about the organizations selected to receive the
40 first three-year grants.

1 (5) (a) By November 15, 2021, and by November 15th of every third
2 year thereafter, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the office of
3 the superintendent of public instruction must provide a report to the
4 appropriate committees of the legislature that:

5 (i) Details how, and the extent to which, the grants were used to
6 expand community-based mentorship programs;

7 (ii) Provides demographic information on the students served by
8 the grant recipients;

9 (iii) Summarizes the results of student satisfaction surveys
10 administered by the grant recipients;

11 (iv) Provides, to the extent the data is available, graduation
12 rates and posthigh school training and education data, such as
13 enrollment in and completion of apprenticeship programs, certificate
14 programs, two-year programs, and four-year programs; and

15 (v) Includes recommendations for continuing, modifying, or
16 expanding the grant program.

17 (b) Data on students served by the grant recipient's mentorship
18 programs must be compared, wherever practicable, to data on students
19 who would have been eligible for the programs, but were not served by
20 the grant recipients.

--- END ---