
SENATE BILL 5180

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Senators Shin, Roach, Benton, Conway, Harper, Keiser, Sheldon, McAuliffe, Hill, Hatfield, Frockt, Schlicher, and Kline

Read first time 01/22/13. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving access to higher education for
2 students with disabilities; creating new sections; and providing an
3 expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that postsecondary
6 education helps individuals to become productive and contributing
7 members of society, and that individuals with disabilities are equally
8 benefited by obtaining postsecondary education. The legislature also
9 finds that students with disabilities face a disproportionate number of
10 challenges when transitioning to postsecondary education, and that
11 people who have disabilities are less than half as likely to have a
12 baccalaureate degree compared to people who do not have a disability.
13 The legislature finds it is incumbent upon the state to address these
14 challenges in order to provide all students in Washington state with an
15 equal opportunity to pursue a successful future.

16 In calling together a diverse group of experts from throughout the
17 state, the legislature intends to develop recommendations that will
18 directly increase the success rate for students with disabilities who

1 are transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education, which are
2 distinctively different parts of the educational system.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A legislative task force on improving
4 access to higher education for students with disabilities is
5 established.

6 (2) The task force must collaborate to carry out the following
7 goals:

8 (a) Make the transition from K-12 education to higher education
9 more seamless and successful;

10 (b) Select a statewide method of sharing best practices between and
11 among K-12 education institutions and postsecondary education
12 institutions;

13 (c) Review documentation of disabilities at postsecondary education
14 institutions, including developing resources for how school districts,
15 in collaboration with students and their families, can get disability
16 documentation applicable for postsecondary education institutions
17 completed before a student's high school graduation; and

18 (d) Create a plan for how school districts and postsecondary
19 education institutions can improve outreach to students and their
20 families regarding available options in higher education.

21 (3) The task force must consist of not more than twenty-eight
22 members and must include the following members:

23 (a) Seven members appointed by the governor as follows:

24 (i) Four private citizens with experience advocating and providing
25 services for students with disabilities, at least one of whom must
26 currently be or who in the past was a parent of a student with a
27 disability, at least one of whom must be a current student at a
28 postsecondary education institution in Washington, and at least one of
29 whom must have experience advocating for veterans with disabilities;
30 and

31 (ii) Three representatives from nonprofit organizations focused on
32 advocating for citizens with disabilities or providing services for
33 citizens with disabilities, or both;

34 (b) Eight members appointed by the office of the superintendent of
35 public instruction as follows:

36 (i) Two representatives from the office of the superintendent of
37 public instruction;

1 (ii) Two representatives from educational service districts; and
2 (iii) Four representatives from local school districts that have
3 high concentrations of students with disabilities enrolled in the
4 district;

5 (c) Four members appointed by the state board for community and
6 technical colleges as follows:

7 (i) One representative from the state board for community and
8 technical colleges; and

9 (ii) Three representatives from public community or technical
10 colleges;

11 (d) Four members appointed by the council of presidents, including
12 one representative from the council and three representatives from a
13 regional university as defined in RCW 28B.10.016;

14 (e) One member appointed by the superintendent of the state school
15 for the blind, from the state school for the blind;

16 (f) One member appointed by the secretary of the department of
17 social and health services, from the department of social and health
18 services;

19 (g) One member appointed by the executive secretary of the
20 governor's committee on disability issues and employment, from the
21 governor's committee on disability issues and employment;

22 (h) One member appointed by the chair of the developmental
23 disabilities council, from the developmental disabilities council; and

24 (i) One member appointed by the superintendent of the state school
25 for the deaf, from the state school for the deaf.

26 (4) The purpose of the task force is to make recommendations to the
27 legislature and to coordinate and implement the goals in subsection (2)
28 of this section.

29 (5)(a) When making the recommendations regarding subsection (2)(a)
30 of this section, the task force must consider:

31 (i) How to ensure students' interests, goals, and strengths guide
32 the transition planning process;

33 (ii) How to enable collaboration and communication between and
34 among schools, institutions of higher education, and relevant state
35 agencies to provide an effective transition;

36 (iii) How assessment and disability documentation that is
37 acceptable to postsecondary institutions should best be determined and
38 obtained;

1 (iv) How to identify the types of supports and accommodations that
2 students will need in postsecondary environments;

3 (v) How students can plan their high school coursework to
4 sufficiently prepare for the higher education environment; and

5 (vi) If a statewide database of student disability accommodation
6 equipment, software, and resources owned by school districts and
7 postsecondary education institutions should be created to assist
8 students' educational transitions and, if created, what public entity
9 is best suited to be responsible for the creation, maintenance, and the
10 scope of that database.

11 (b) When making recommendations regarding subsection (2)(c) of this
12 section, the task force is encouraged to consider:

13 (i) What should constitute a proper and complete documentation of
14 a disability;

15 (ii) How recently the documentation must have been completed; and

16 (iii) Which testing information, if any, must be included in the
17 documentation.

18 (6) The student achievement council must provide staff support to
19 the task force. The task force is encouraged to use technology to
20 expand access and limit costs.

21 (7) The task force shall report its recommendations for each goal
22 to the legislature by December 1, 2013, and annually each December 1st
23 thereafter until expiration of the task force.

24 (8) This section expires January 1, 2016.

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