

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1444

As of March 14, 2017

Title: An act relating to facilitating on-time grade level progression and graduation for certain students.

Brief Description: Facilitating on-time grade level progression and graduation for certain students.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Caldier, Santos, Kilduff, Muri, Senn, Appleton, Fey, Pollet and Slatter).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/01/17, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/13/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires school districts to incorporate procedures to facilitate the on-time grade level progression and graduation of at-risk youth, children in need of services, or homeless students.
- States that school districts must waive local graduation requirements if a student has enrolled in three or more school districts as a high school student and has met state requirements but is ineligible to graduate after all alternatives have been considered.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Dependent Students. Current law requires school districts to have certain procedures to help the on-time grade level progression and graduation of dependent students. Dependent, in this case, means abandoned; abused or neglected by a person legally responsible for the care of the child; has no parent, guardian, or custodian capable of adequately caring for the child; or receives extended foster care services.

School district procedures include the following:

- waiving specific courses for graduation if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another school district;

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- consolidating unresolved or incomplete coursework and providing opportunities for credit accrual through local classroom hours, correspondence courses, or portable assisted study sequence units designed for migrant high school students; and
- ensuring the receipt of a diploma if the student meets the graduation requirements of a sending school district but not the receiving school district and all alternatives have been considered.

At-Risk Youth and Children in Need of Services. The Family Reconciliation Act provides services and assistance for families that are in conflict and dealing with issues of children who run away, have substance abuse problems, or who are endangered because of behavior that their parents are unable to control. A parent, child, or the Department of Social and Health Services may seek court assistance by filing an at-risk youth or child in need of services petition.

Homeless Students. The education title of the code defines homeless students as students without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. That federal law provides federal grant funding to states for the purpose of supporting school districts to serve homeless students.

Local Graduation Requirements. In addition to the state minimum requirements for graduation, local school districts may have additional credit and non-credit graduation requirements, such as community service, culminating projects, and technology requirements.

Summary of Bill: In addition to dependent students, school districts must incorporate procedures to facilitate the on-time grade level progression and graduation of at-risk youth, children in need of services, or homeless students.

School district procedures must include that when a student has enrolled in three or more school districts as a high school student and has met state requirements but is ineligible to graduate from the receiving school district after all alternatives have been considered, the receiving school district must waive its local requirements and ensure the receipt of a diploma.

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: When students in foster care move to a new school, school counselors enroll these students in classes that local school districts require for graduation. For example, some school districts require financial management, swim, or history classes. Students may have difficulty meeting the state graduation requirements because of these additional local requirements. This bill extends these procedures to

homeless students and students who are experiencing an unstable home life. Waiving local graduation requirements is already allowed for students from military families.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Michelle Caldier, Prime Sponsor; Sommer-Rose Calsadillas, foster youth.

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