

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5859

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As of February 21, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to improving high school graduation success by investing in educational mentor programs.

**Brief Description:** Investing in educational mentor programs.

**Sponsors:** Senators Mullet, Salomon, Wilson, C., Nguyen and Wellman.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/20/19.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates the Educational Mentor Grant Program to expand community-based mentor programs and increase the number of participating high school students from underrepresented populations.

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

**Staff:** Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

**Background:** Mentoring takes place between a young mentee and an older mentor who acts in a non-professional capacity to provide relationship-based support that benefits the mentee's development. There are many mentoring models, with the most common being one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring, and peer mentoring. There are also a variety of recognized mentorship program settings, such as community-based, school-based, and online mentoring.

The Chair's Initiative for a Sounder Future provides grants to help fund efforts of youth mentoring programs across Washington. Funding for the program is generated through the sale of Seattle Sounder FC special license plates. The maximum grant award is \$5,000, and successful applicants must provide a 50 percent match.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute):** Grant Program Creation. The Educational Mentor Grant Program is created with the purpose of increasing graduation rates for high school students from underrepresented populations through expanded community-based mentor programs.

Application. By August 1, 2019, and every three years after, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must select grant recipients from applicants that are direct service providers with at least ten years of experience delivering one-to-one mentoring and:

- have demonstrated success in offering a mentorship program that adheres to national benchmarks and increases high school graduation rates for students from demographic groups with low graduation rates;
- demonstrate capacity to expand the mentorship program;
- match participating high school students from underrepresented populations with committed, caring adults from the students' communities;
- agree to screen and train adults before matching them with students;
- introduce students to postsecondary school options and ensure seniors have a post-high school plan for economic stability;
- maintain cash or in-kind donations from private sources; and
- agree to collaborate with OSPI on reporting requirements.

Grant Award. Subject to amounts appropriated, OSPI must distribute three-year grants to selected organizations to help increase the number of high school students from underrepresented populations in the mentorship program from the prior year. At least one of the selected organizations must serve students from eastern Washington, and at least one must serve students from western Washington. At least one must serve students from a rural area.

Reporting Requirements. By November 15, 2019, OSPI must provide a report to the Legislature describing the application process and providing information about the first grant recipients.

By November 15, 2021, and every three years after, OSPI must report information to the Legislature that:

- details how grants were used to expand community-based mentorship programs;
- provides demographic information on the students served by the grant recipients;
- summarizes the results of student satisfaction surveys;
- provides graduation rates and post-high school training and education data; and
- includes recommendations for continuing, modifying, or expanding the grant program.

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

**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 on Proposed Substitute:** PRO: This is a way to get mentor programs spread throughout the state to change kids' lives, especially those who would not otherwise graduate. Mentor U is a program designed to support high school students who would not graduate without extra supports. It combines one-on-one mentoring with career integrated learning by looking at high school and beyond plans and connecting them to real life. One mentee was matched at a time when they felt helpless and overwhelmed, knowing that systemic barriers and lack of access would make the dream of attending college and law school impossible. Their mentor restored hope when it was desperately needed by taking them on college visits, assisting with resumes, providing feedback, and supplementing the parent's support. High school is a critical time, and students in poverty, people of color, and those who have experienced trauma face greater challenges. Mentors offer support to these students. They provide important influence and advice that can alter a mentee's paths forever.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Mark Mullet, Prime Sponsor; Jolynn Kenney, Big Brothers Big Sisters Puget Sound; Janice Deguchi, Community for Youth; Tadeau Velloso, citizen; August Jackson, Student; Davion Grimes, Student; Dwight Walton, citizen; Amanda Alvarado, citizen.

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