

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6255

As of January 29, 2020

Title: An act relating to supporting access to child care for parents who are attending high school or working toward completion of a high school equivalency certificate.

Brief Description: Supporting access to child care for parents who are attending high school or working toward completion of a high school equivalency certificate.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, C., Randall, Darneille, Lovelett, Das, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nguyen, Van De Wege and Hunt; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/24/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes Working Connections Child Care eligibility and copayment requirements for a parent who is attending high school or is working toward completing a high school equivalency certificate.
- Requires school districts to provide transportation to students who request to transport their infant.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Working Connections Child Care. This federally and state-funded program provides child care subsidies to families with an income at or below 200 percent of FPL—\$43,440 for a family of three. The state pays part of the cost of child care when a parent is employed, self-employed, or in approved activities, except in certain circumstances. The family is responsible for making a copayment to the child care provider based on the family's countable income. The minimum copayment is \$15 a month.

A WCCC applicant or consumer not participating in WorkFirst and who is under 22 years of age may be eligible for WCCC benefits for a high school or general educational development—also known as GED—program without a minimum number of employment hours.

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.

Transportation. The operation of each school district's student transportation program is declared to be the responsibility of the district's board of directors. A school district may authorize or provide, in whole or part, individual transportation for a student if it is approved by the educational service district superintendent or designee and meets certain requirements.

Summary of Bill: Working Connections Child Care. A parent who is attending high school or working toward a high school equivalency certificate is eligible to receive WCCC. When determining consumer eligibility and copayment, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF):

- must treat the parent as their own household when determining household income;
- must, within existing resources, authorize full-day subsidized child care during the school year when certain requirements are met;
- may not consider the availability of the other biological parent when authorizing care; and
- may not require a copayment.

To receive authorization for full-day subsidized child care, a parent must participate in 110 hours of approved activities per month; have a household income not exceed 85 percent of the state median income at the time of application; and meet all other eligibility requirements.

Transportation. By July 1, 2021, at the request of an eligible student, a school district may allow the student to transport their infant on a school bus or other student transportation vehicle provided by the district. The infant must be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system as defined in the federal motor vehicle safety standards.

When a school district denies this request, it must authorize other arrangements for individual transportation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2020.

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: All students should have the opportunity to succeed and fulfill their potential. This bill supports young parents who are working toward completing their high school education and who will serve as a model for their children. Child care and transportation are the biggest barriers for young parents trying to finish high school. The changes in this bill will not be too expensive, but they will be meaningful. It will also help eliminate unlawful discrimination against parenting students.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Melanie Smith, Washington Anti-Poverty Advocates Group; Michelle Spenser, The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction'.

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