
SENATE BILL 5884

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Frockt, Palumbo, Lias, Kuderer, Nguyen, Hunt, and Wilson, C.

Read first time 02/08/19. Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the evergreen promise pilot
2 program, which provides for affordable access to institutions of
3 higher education; adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW; and
4 providing an expiration date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The evergreen promise pilot program is
7 established to demonstrate the impact of free college programs in
8 improving high school graduation rates, college matriculation, and
9 subsequently postsecondary degree and credential attainment. The
10 purpose of the program is to encourage more Washington high school
11 students in schools with low college attendance rates to enroll in
12 and successfully complete a degree or certificate that will lead to
13 opportunities for further education and jobs. By making a higher
14 education credential more affordable and accessible, Washington will
15 make more progress towards the legislature's goal of seventy percent
16 of Washington adults having a postsecondary credential by 2023.

17 (2) It is the intent of the legislature to implement the program
18 beginning with up to six pilot high schools. The legislature
19 recognizes that promise programs are proven to significantly increase
20 high school graduation rates by ensuring all high school graduates
21 know they can attend college or community or technical college

1 regardless of their family incomes. Thus, investment in these
2 programs is an evidence-based means to improve high school graduation
3 rates and to reduce, or even eliminate, opportunity gaps in
4 postsecondary education for students from underrepresented minority
5 groups, low-income students, foster youth, and students with
6 disabilities.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
8 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
9 otherwise.

- 10 (1) "Council" means the Washington student achievement council.
- 11 (2) "Eligible degree or certificate program" means a degree or
12 credential program at an institution of higher education as defined
13 in RCW 28B.92.030.
- 14 (3) "Evergreen promise award" means:
- 15 (a) For students attending two-year or four-year institutions of
16 higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, the difference between
17 the student's tuition and required fees, less the value of any state-
18 funded grant, scholarship, or waiver assistance the student receives,
19 plus five hundred dollars for books and materials;
- 20 (b) For students attending private four-year institutions of
21 higher education in Washington, the representative average of awards
22 granted to students in public research universities in Washington or
23 the representative average of awards granted to students in public
24 research universities in Washington in the year of high school
25 graduation, whichever is greater;
- 26 (c) For students attending private vocational schools in
27 Washington, the representative average of awards granted to students
28 in public community and technical colleges in Washington or the
29 representative average of awards granted to students in public
30 community and technical colleges in Washington in the year of high
31 school graduation, whichever is greater; or
- 32 (d) For students attending approved apprenticeship programs,
33 tuition and fees, as determined by the office, in addition to
34 required program supplies and equipment.
- 35 (4) "Gift aid" means financial aid received from the federal Pell
36 grant, the state need grant program under chapter 28B.92 RCW, the
37 college bound scholarship program under chapter 28B.118 RCW, the
38 opportunity grant program under chapter 28B.50 RCW, the opportunity
39 scholarship program under chapter 28B.145 RCW, and any other state

1 grant or scholarship program that provides funds for educational
2 purposes with no obligation of repayment. "Gift aid" does not include
3 student loans or work-study programs.

4 (5) "Institutions of higher education" has the same meaning as in
5 RCW 28B.10.016.

6 (6) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance.

7 (7) "Pilot cohort" means all students at a pilot high school in
8 the high school graduating class of 2024.

9 (8) "Pilot high school" means a public high school in Washington
10 state selected by the office subject to the requirements of the
11 program under this chapter.

12 (9) "Program" means the evergreen promise pilot program.

13 (10) "Resident student" has the same meaning as in RCW
14 28B.15.012.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts
16 appropriated for this specific purpose, for the 2019-20 academic
17 year, the office shall select up to six pilot high schools to
18 participate in the program under this section.

19 (2) The office shall use the following criteria in identifying
20 pilot high schools to participate in the program:

21 (a) The pilot high school must be in the bottom quartile of
22 college matriculation as measured by the high school's graduates
23 having an enrollment record at a postsecondary institution at some
24 point in the academic year following graduation, which is the summer
25 term immediately following graduation through spring term of the next
26 calendar year; and

27 (b) Each of the pilot high schools selected must be located in
28 different legislative districts with at least one selected from the
29 eastern side of the crest of the Cascade mountain range.

30 (3) At each pilot high school, one pilot cohort shall be selected
31 to receive evergreen promise awards. An evergreen promise award is
32 subject to a student meeting the following eligibility criteria:

33 (a) Must complete an annual application for aid as approved by
34 the office;

35 (b) Be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a)
36 through (e);

37 (c) Has not previously earned a bachelor's degree from an
38 institution of higher education;

1 (d) Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment for at least three
2 quarter credits or the equivalent at an institution of higher
3 education and enroll within six months of high school graduation; and

4 (e) Have graduated from an eligible pilot high school.

5 (4) To remain eligible for the program, once a student has earned
6 forty-five credits, the student must meet the requirements of the
7 institution of higher education's satisfactory academic progress
8 policy for state financial aid to remain qualified or an alternative
9 measure of student progress determined by a registered apprenticeship
10 program.

11 (5) An eligible student may receive an evergreen promise award
12 for a maximum of twelve academic quarters or the semester equivalent.

13 (6) An eligible student enrolled on a part-time basis shall
14 receive a prorated portion of an evergreen promise award for any
15 academic period in which he or she is enrolled on a part-time basis.

16 (7) Institutions of higher education shall award the student all
17 need-based and merit-based financial aid for which the student would
18 otherwise qualify. An evergreen promise award is intended to replace
19 unmet need, loans, and, at the student's option, work-study award
20 before any other grants or scholarships are reduced.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts
22 appropriated for this specific purpose, the council shall provide
23 each pilot high school and pilot cohort with any one or more of the
24 following interventions with the intention of improving high school
25 graduation, college matriculation, and subsequently postsecondary
26 degree and credential attainment:

27 (a) Academic preparation that may include access to college
28 preparatory curriculum, academic counseling, study skills and time
29 management instruction, or increased dual credit opportunities;

30 (b) Career exploration that may include opportunities for
31 internships, employer visitation and business after school programs,
32 or other work-based learning opportunities;

33 (c) Social support that may include peer mentoring, personal and
34 social enrichment opportunities, or other mentoring programs;

35 (d) Summer programming that may include academic tutoring in core
36 subjects, college and career visitations, motivational and enrichment
37 activities, or postsecondary bridge programs;

38 (e) Interventions to help students and families navigate
39 postsecondary pathways that may include informational interventions,

1 application assistance, entrance exam preparation and tutoring,
2 counseling about admissions requirements and financial aid
3 opportunities, financial support to participate in college visits, or
4 admissions and exam fee waivers and scholarships.

5 (2) (a) The council shall, in partnership with the pilot high
6 school, prepare a plan for ensuring that students receiving an
7 evergreen promise award have access to the support necessary to
8 navigate the transition from high school to an institution of higher
9 education.

10 (b) The council shall provide the plan to the relevant committees
11 of the legislature by December 31, 2019, and begin implementation of
12 the plan for the 2020-21 academic year.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The council shall conduct a study on
14 the effectiveness of the evergreen promise pilot program and the
15 Seattle promise program, including but not limited to:

16 (a) Changes in participation in dual credit programs at pilot
17 high schools and among pilot cohorts;

18 (b) Changes in high school graduation rates as a result of the
19 programs;

20 (c) Changes in college matriculations rates as a result of the
21 programs;

22 (d) Effects on student persistence, completion, and time-to-
23 degree rates in eligible degree or certificate programs as a result
24 of receipt of awards;

25 (e) Any change in need or delivery of student services;

26 (f) The fiscal impact of the programs on the students,
27 institutions of higher education, pilot high schools, local
28 communities, and the state;

29 (g) Any other benefits to students, communities, or the state as
30 a result of the programs.

31 (2) To the extent possible, the council shall report its findings
32 to the relevant committees of the legislature beginning December 1,
33 2022, and on a biannual basis thereafter until the conclusion of the
34 evergreen promise pilot program.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** This act may be known and cited as the
36 evergreen promise act.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** This chapter expires July 1, 2029.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 7 of this act
2 constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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