
Education Committee

HB 1208

Brief Description: Modifying the learning assistance program.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Steele, Lekanoff, Paul, Callan, Ortiz-Self, Bergquist and Harris-Talley.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that school districts budget and expend Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funds: (1) immediately and temporarily, to identify and address student academic deficits in basic skills resulting from and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; and (2) at the end of the Governor-declared state of emergency due to COVID-19 or beginning September 1, 2025, whichever is later, using the framework of the Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol.
- Makes changes to requirements and restrictions on the use of LAP funds, for example: the LAP is no longer required to focus first on addressing the reading needs of kindergarten through fourth grade students or to be designed to reduce disruptive behaviors; and the list of best practices, strategies, services and activities that may be supported by the LAP is repealed.
- Directs the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning to annually summarize innovations made by school districts to reduce barriers to the academic achievement of students participating in the LAP.
- Expands the Extended Learning Opportunity Program to ninth and tenth grades.

Hearing Date: 1/29/21

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

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Learning Assistance Program. *Program Design.* In order to assist students who are not meeting academic standards and reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom, the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) is designed to: (1) promote the use of data when developing programs; and (2) guide school districts in providing the most effective and efficient practices when implementing supplemental instruction and services. "Students who are not meeting academic standards" means students with the greatest academic deficits in basic skills as identified by statewide, school, or district assessments, or other performance measurement tools.

Program Focus. School districts implementing a LAP must focus first on addressing the reading literacy needs of students in kindergarten through fourthgrade (K-4) who are deficient in reading or reading readiness skills.

Menu of Best Practices. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) publishes a state menu of best practices and strategies for reading and literacy improvement, for use in the LAP to assist struggling students in English language arts and mathematics and to reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Districts were required to begin using these best practices and strategies in the 2016-17 school year or comply with certain requirements to obtain approval from the OSPI to use an alternative practice or strategy. School districts may enter cooperative agreements with state agencies, local governments, or school districts for administrative or operational costs needed to provide services in accordance with the state menu.

To the extent included on the state menu or an approved alternative, specified services and activities may be supported by the LAP, for example: extended learning time opportunities; defined professional development activities; consultants; tutoring; outreach and support for parents; and development of partnerships with community-based organizations, educational service districts, and other local agencies to deliver academic and nonacademic supports, if approved by the school board at an open meeting, with a maximum of 5 percent of the LAP allocation used for this purpose.

The LAP may also support screening, intervention, and staff training requirements related to students in grades kindergarten through second grade who have indications of, or areas associated with, dyslexia, even if the students are not eligible to participate in the LAP.

Funding. The state provides two types of funding allocations for the LAP. School districts and schools qualify for one or both allocations based on prior years' percentages of students who qualify for free or reduced price meals. First, the state allocates funding to school districts to provide, on a statewide average, 2.3975 hours per week in extra instruction in a class size of 15 students. Districts must spend this allocation for the LAP, but they may use the funding to provide LAP services for any qualifying student. Second, under the high poverty-based LAP allocation, the state allocates funding to school districts to provide, on a statewide average, 1.1

hours per week in extra instruction in a class size of 15 students. Districts may spend this high poverty-based allocation only for LAP services in those schools that qualify for this funding.

Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol Framework. The Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol (WISSP), has been developed by the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning within the OSPI. The purposes of the protocol include: (1) supporting a school-based approach to promoting the success of all students by coordinating academic and nonacademic supports to reduce barriers to academic achievement and educational attainment; (2) fulfilling a vision of public education where educators focus on education, students focus on learning, and auxiliary supports enable teaching and learning to occur unimpeded; (3) encouraging the creation, expansion, and quality improvement of community-based supports that can be integrated into the academic environment of schools and school districts; (4) increasing public awareness of the evidence showing that academic outcomes are a result of both academic and nonacademic factors; and (5) supporting statewide and local organizations in their efforts to provide leadership, coordination, technical assistance, professional development, and advocacy to implement high-quality, evidence-based, student-centered, coordinated approaches throughout the state.

The framework of the WISSP includes needs assessments, integration and coordination, community partnerships, and a requirement that the protocol be data driven. The framework must facilitate the ability of any academic or nonacademic provider to support the needs of at-risk students, including: out-of-school providers, social workers, mental health counselors, physicians, dentists, speech therapists, and audiologists.

Summary of Bill:

Budgeting and Expending Program Funds. School districts must immediately budget and expend LAP appropriations to identify and address student academic deficits in basic skills resulting from and exacerbated by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and are encouraged to budget and expend LAP funds using the framework of the WISSP.

Upon the expiration or termination of the state of emergency declared by the Governor for all counties in Washington due to COVID-19 or beginning September 1, 2025, whichever is later, school districts must budget and expend LAP appropriations using the framework of the WISSP.

Program Modifications. Changes are made to requirements and restrictions on the use of LAP funds, for example: (1) the LAP is no longer required to focus first on addressing the reading needs of k-4 students or to be designed to reduce disruptive behaviors; (2) school districts are not required to use a practice or strategy from the state menu or obtain approval to use an alternative practice or strategy; (3) the list of best practices, strategies, services and activities that may be supported by the LAP, including the cap on the use of LAP funds for partnership development is repealed; and (4) permission to use LAP funds to meet dyslexia screening and intervention requirements for students who are not eligible to participate in the LAP, and to use LAP funds for staff dyslexia trainings, is removed.

Best Practice Research and Report. The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL), within OSPI, must provide research on programs and practices to support students who are not meeting academic standards. Beginning December 1, 2026, the CISL must annually review the LAP performance data reported by school districts and report to the Legislature with a summary of the innovations made by school districts to reduce barriers to the academic achievement of students participating in the LAP.

Extended Learning Opportunities. The Extended Learning Opportunities program (for students not on track to meet graduation requirements or enter successfully into high school) is expanded to ninth and tenth grade students, from eleventh and twelfth grade students.

Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol Framework. The framework of the WISSP is modified to specify that a system-level needs assessment with resource mapping must be conducted to identify academic and nonacademic supports that are currently available or lacking in schools, school districts, and the community.

Student Performance Goals. The list of student groups for which the State Board of Education (SBE) may adopt and revise performance goals in various subjects is modified. Instead of adopting a goal for students from disproportionately academically underachieving racial and ethnic backgrounds, the SBE may adopt a goal for students who are not meeting academic standards. In addition, the goals for each student group must be disaggregated by specified racial and ethnic categories.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 2021.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.