
Education Committee

HB 1658

Brief Description: Authorizing public high school students to earn elective credit for paid work experience.

Sponsors: Representatives Shavers, Santos, Morgan, Ramel, Taylor and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes high school students aged 16 and over to earn up to two elective credits through paid work experience if specified requirements, including advanced approval and alignment with the student's High School and Beyond Plan, are met.
- Provides that proposals for earning elective high school credit through paid work experience may only be approved at high schools that provide students with the opportunity to learn and master the state financial education learning standards
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt and periodically revise rules to implement the elective credit through paid work experience provisions.

Hearing Date: 2/6/23

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Graduation Requirements.

To qualify for a high school diploma, public school students must satisfy credit and subject area requirements established by the Legislature and the State Board of Education (SBE), fulfill any locally established requirements, complete a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP), and meet

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the requirements of at least one graduation pathway option.

Graduating students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas as determined by the SBE. Of the required credits, 17 are in core subject areas (*e.g.*, English language arts, mathematics, science). The remaining seven credits are more flexible; four are elective credits and three are personalized pathways credits determined by the student's interests and their HSBP. In limited circumstances, waivers for credit and subject area requirements can be granted to students.

State Learning Standards/Financial Education Learning Standards.

Washington's program of basic education establishes four goals for school districts pertaining to the opportunity for every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential for practicing certain academic skills and concepts. The fourth goal addresses "the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities."

In 2015, financial education learning standards developed by a national coalition for personal finance literacy were adopted in statute as the state financial education learning standards. In 2016, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in accordance with its duty to develop state learning standards based on the four basic education goals, adopted financial education learning standards for public school students in all grades.

The OSPI, subject to consultation requirements with the Financial Education Public-Private Partnership, is required to make available to all school districts a list of materials that align with the financial education learning standards.

School districts must provide all students in grades 9 through 12 with the opportunity to access the financial education learning standards. School districts also must publicize the availability of financial education opportunities to students and families, and they are encouraged to grant credit toward high school graduation requirements to students who successfully complete financial education courses.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matters pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and its office has numerous and broad responsibilities prescribed in statute, including:

- making rules and regulations necessary for the administration of public education requirements;
- preparing courses of study and other materials and books for the discharge of education duties;
- fulfilling financial responsibilities, including distributing legislatively allocated funds to districts for the operation of the public school system, and awarding numerous state and federally funded grants; and
- satisfying numerous reporting and other duties assigned by the Legislature.

On August 4, 2022, the Superintendent of Public Instruction announced a proposal to allow students aged 16 and over to earn elective credits toward their high school diploma through paid work experience that is verified by their school. The OSPI indicated its intent to initiate rulemaking for this proposal, with the objective of having the program implemented for the 2023–24 school year.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning in the 2023–24 school year, public high school students aged 16 years and older may earn up to two elective high school credit through paid work experience, provided specified requirements are met.

Proposals for earning elective credit through paid work experience may only be approved at high schools that provide students with the opportunity to learn and master the state financial education learning standards.

Proposals for earning elective high school credit through paid work experience must:

- be approved in advance and in writing by the applicable school counselor or principal and a work-based sponsor who will serve as the point of contact for the employer and participate in supervising the student during the student's employment;
- align with the student's HSBP;
- include a student narrative describing how the paid work experience will enable the student to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the goals of basic education, including and in particular those essential to understanding the importance of work and finance; and
- include provisions for demonstrating or otherwise assessing the student's:
 - grade-level proficiencies on the state financial education learning standards for employment and income or financial decisions; and
 - growth in proficiency in meeting the state financial education learning standards as measured from prework to post-work experience assessments.

One elective high school credit will be awarded for each 360 hours of paid and verified work experience to students who, as determined by the appropriate school official, meet the requirements for earning elective credit through paid work experience. High school credit may not be awarded for prior paid work experiences.

The OSPI must adopt rules to implement the elective credit through paid work experience provisions. Schools may not approve a student's proposal for earning elective high school credit through paid work experience before the OSPI rules have been adopted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 2, 2023.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.