

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2808

As of February 21, 2008

Title: An act relating to providing enhanced counseling and learning opportunities for certain high school students.

Brief Description: Providing additional opportunities to assist students who have not completed all graduation requirements.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Sullivan, Upthegrove, Quall, Liias, Priest, Green, Conway, Pedersen, Kenney, Hudgins, Santos, Kelley and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/08, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/21/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: The graduating class of 2008 will be the first students who must meet the state standard in Reading and Writing content areas on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), in addition to meeting other graduation requirements to earn a diploma.

Three state programs offer assistance to high school students based on their performance on the WASL. The Promoting Academic Success (PAS) program provides funds for school districts to offer remediation to help eleventh and twelfth grade students pass the WASL on a retake or through an alternative assessment. Schools must prepare a Student Learning Plan (SLP) for each student who was not successful on the WASL during the previous school year. The SLP identifies the courses and interventions the school will make available to assist the student. In 2007 legislation was enacted to create a pilot program and funding mechanism for two community and technical colleges to offer instruction and courses to students who had met all graduation requirements except passing the WASL. Bates and Renton Technical Colleges were selected for the pilot.

Under current law, students who have not yet received a high school diploma are eligible to continue attending public schools until they are 21 years old. School districts report the students as enrolled, and they generate state and federal funding allocations.

Summary of Bill: The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must develop information and training for counselors and mentor teachers, including a training module at the OSPI Summer Institutes, on providing guidance to students who have completed required

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course credits, but have not passed the WASL, and will not be ready to graduate with their class. Guidance and counseling programs must include support for high school completion and assistance for developing a career pathway that will lead to additional education and a family wage job. The programs must provide information on the local availability of high school completion and/or GED certification options; skills training and tutoring options; online learning opportunities; workforce education and training options; and financial aid for postsecondary education.

If funding is provided, OSPI must allocate funds to school districts and educational service districts (ESDs) to provide the enhanced guidance, counseling, support, and assistance for targeted students. Funding should be allocated based on the numbers of targeted students, with allocations to ESDs where students are more dispersed. OSPI must annually report on student participation and outcomes from these enhanced programs.

If funding is provided, OSPI must allocate grants to school districts, skill centers, and EDS to create High School Plus programs for targeted students. High School Plus programs must provide skill instruction needed to pass the WASL using alternative service delivery methods; offer assistance with compiling a collection of evidence alternative assessment; provide enhanced counseling; and connect student with opportunities to enroll in additional courses, work-based learning, internships, or other programs that provide entry to a career pathway that will lead to additional education and a family wage job.

The grants are competitive, with funds allocated largely on the number of targeted students. OSPI must announce the first round of grant recipients no later than June 15, 2008. Grant funds are for start-up costs, program development, and ongoing capacity to operate the program. School districts are also authorized to use funds allocated for students under age 21, who are enrolled for purposes of completing a diploma, any funds provided for enhanced counseling programs, and other available resources.

OSPI must submit a report by September 15, 2009, on the program design and outcomes of High School Plus programs, and recommend an ongoing funding mechanism for the program.

A null and void clause is included.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Second Substitute Bill: PRO: We want to keep students who did not pass the WASL engaged. We need to provide these students with additional counseling and opportunities regardless of when they need help. It is concerning that this problem is being addressed at the end of the pipeline rather than at the beginning. Counselors may not be aware of all community-based services; thus, it will be good to provide enhanced counseling. Funding for additional counselors will be necessary. Social workers could also help by visiting students at home. Course retrieval might be an option. This bill

complements E2SSB 6673. However, the Senate version has better early identification/ notification and an expanded targeted population.

OTHER: There are not enough social workers or counselors, and it is too little too late. These issues need to be addressed before students reach high school.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Sullivan, prime sponsor; Kim Howard, Washington State PTA; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Brian Jefferies, OSPI; Brittany Olson, Alex Carlson-Helo, Youth Council.

OTHER: Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition.