

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 6673

As Amended by House, March 11, 2008

Title: An act relating to learning opportunities to assist students to obtain a high school diploma.

Brief Description: Creating learning opportunities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Brandland, Hobbs, McDermott, Rasmussen, Weinstein, Oemig, Tom, Kauffman, Hargrove, Fairley, Franklin and Shin; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/21/08, 1/31/08 [DPS-WM, DNP].
Ways & Means: 2/11/08, 2/12/08 [DP2S].
Passed Senate: 2/13/08, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6673 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Brandland, Hobbs, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig, Rasmussen and Weinstein.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Minority Member; Holmquist.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6673 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) measures student learning of the state's essential academic learning requirements. Students are tested each spring in grades 3-8 and 10 in reading and math. Students also are tested in writing in grades

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.

4, 7, and 10 and in science in grades 5, 8, and 10. Current law requires student learning plans to be developed for students in grades 8-12 who are not successful on any or all of the content areas of the WASL. The plans must include the courses, competencies, and other steps needed to be taken by the student to meet the state academic standards and stay on track for graduation.

Beginning with the class of 2008, a student may graduate from high school with a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) if they successfully complete four state requirements:

- 1) earn the 19 minimum course requirements established by the state (and any additional local school district requirements);
- 2) meet the state standard on the reading, writing, and mathematics WASL or an approved alternative assessment;
- 3) complete a culminating project; and
- 4) create a high school and beyond plan.

Until 2013 a student may graduate from high school without a CAA if they successfully complete the four state requirements except for meeting the state mathematics' standard on the WASL. Those students must then earn two additional credits in mathematics in order to graduate.

The Learning Assistance Program is a state-funded program to assist students who are underachieving in academic basic skills using authorized services and activities.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) establishes policies and practices for education preparation and certification programs.

Last session, the Legislature created the Washington College Bound Scholarship to cover the costs of college tuition fees and books for low-income students who sign a pledge in seventh or eighth grade promising to graduate from high school and demonstrate good citizenship.

Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill: The Extended Learning Opportunities program (Program) is created for eighth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students, who are not on track to meet the state or local high school graduation requirements, and for eighth grade students, who are not on track to meet the state standard on the WASL. The program requires schools to provide early notice to students and their parents of graduation status, and other specified information. Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, the notification must occur up to three times: 1) in the spring of the student's eighth grade year; 2) in the spring of the student's eleventh grade year; and if necessary; 3) in the spring of the student's twelfth grade year. The notice may be provided through school conferences, written notification, or in the student learning plan and must be translated into the primary language of the family, if feasible.

Under the Program, school districts must make available to students in the twelfth grade, who have failed to meet one or more of the state or local graduation requirements, the option for continuing enrollment in the school district. A list of possible types of instructional services, and times and locations of the instructional services, are provided, including reading specialists at the educational service districts (ESDs) to provide professional development to educators and direct services to eligible eighth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students.

The allowable uses of funds from the Learning Assistance Program are expanded to include providing instructional services under the Program.

If funds are provided, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must explore on-line curriculum support currently available in languages other than English, and report by December 1, 2008, to the Legislature recommendations for other on-line programs in other languages that would most appropriately assist Washington's English language learners.

Subject to funds being appropriated, the SPI must provide for school districts to provide all ninth graders the option to take the PSAT at no cost to the students. The ESDs must develop and provide a program of outreach to community-based programs and organizations serving non-English populations, low-income, and special education students. The ESDs must consult and coordinate with the Governor's minority commissions and the Office of Indian Affairs in conducting the outreach and are encouraged to partner with business. The purpose of the outreach is to inform and engage students in the educational opportunities available under this act.

The PESB must convene a work group to develop recommendations for increasing teacher knowledge, skills, and competencies to address the needs of English language learners. The work group must include specified representatives, and must include members from diverse cultural backgrounds and a balanced geographic representation. The work group must identify gaps and weaknesses in the current standards for teacher preparation and teacher competencies related to language acquisition and cultural competencies. An interim report is due by December 1, 2008, and a final report by December 1, 2009.

The National Geographic Society manages 23 state endowments for the promotion of geography education.

Students who are in the eighth grade during the College Bound Scholarship's first year will have two years within which to learn about and sign up for the scholarship, as is already allowed for students in all subsequent years.

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 Original Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: There are thousands of students who have not met standard in reading and/or writing on the WASL. The bill requires funding to be provided so that we do not have unfunded mandates for these additional services for students. If we can not provide the funding then we should not require the program. The system is changing dramatically but some students are still struggling and this bill will provide the level support needed. Time and resources are essential to support high standards. The opportunity, the equity, the commitment, and the resources must be present on an on-going basis. We particularly support the secondary I-BEST program, which is a very successful program that marries career and technical education with fundamental academic and language skills instruction.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Dr. Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors Association; Kim Howard, Parent Teacher Association; Thelma Jackson, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; Marc Frazer, Washington Roundtable; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Recommended First Substitute (Ways & Means): PRO: Thirty percent of our students do not graduate. This bill is about stopping that flow. It is aimed at engaging students early on to support them in staying in school and give them a variety of additional learning opportunities. We have to hold ourselves accountable to give the schools and students the needed resources to meet the standards we have set. This rightfully focuses on the kids that need the additional assistance.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Isabel Munoz-Colon, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

House Amendment(s): Rather than specifying a separate notification process, the current requirements for student learning plans are modified to include information about test scores, credit deficiencies, progress toward graduation, alternative assessment options, and possible remediation strategies. To the extent feasible, schools serving English language learners will translate the plan into the primary language of the family.

The requirement for school districts to provide all ninth graders the option of taking the PSAT at no cost to the student, if funds are provided, is changed to require districts to provide the option to all tenth graders.

Instead of the PESB's work group on how to teach ELL students making two reports, one in December 2008 and one in December 2009, the work group will only report in December 2008.

Beginning in the 2008-09 school year, an enhancement is created for the Learning Assistance Program funding formula to allocate additional funds to school districts where more than 20 percent of the district's students are enrolled in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program and more than 40 percent of the district's students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

If funding is provided, SPI must allocate grants for summer exploratory career and technical education programs in mathematics, science, and technology in middle and high schools.

Subject to funding, SPI must contract with a national organization to establish and operate a geography endowment in Washington. The organization must provide equal matching funds to the state funds provided. The funds and interest on the endowment must be used for geography education programs, including curriculum, resource collections, and professional development. SPI will annually report on the program.

Rather than specifying a separate notification process, the current requirements for student learning plans are modified to include information about test scores, credit deficiencies, progress toward graduation, alternative assessment options, and possible remediation strategies. To the extent feasible, schools serving English language learners will translate the plan into the primary language of the family.

SPI must allocate funds appropriated in the budget in specified amounts to support implementation of specific sections of this Act.