

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1424

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to enhancing the statewide K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system.

Brief Description: Enhancing the statewide K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Santos, Sullivan, Maxwell, Ryu, Freeman, Stonier, Seaquist, McCoy, Fey, Roberts, Morrell, Kagi, Bergquist and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/12/13, 2/21/13 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/28/13, 3/1/13 [DP2S(w/o sub ED)].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Modifies and clarifies descriptions and definitions of a K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system (System).
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a System assessment tool for use by local partnerships of schools, families, and communities and continue development of a dropout prevention early warning and intervention system.
- Creates a program to allocate funds for graduation coaches for the most struggling high schools, and school success coaches for associated elementary and middle schools, if funds are appropriated.
- Allocates funding for students in approved dropout reengagement programs at a rate of 1.22 per full-time equivalent student.
- Adds dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement services to the basic core services to be provided by Educational Service Districts.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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.

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 20 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Dahlquist, Ranking Minority Member; Magendanz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Fagan, Haigh, Hawkins, Hayes, Hunt, Klippert, Lytton, Maxwell, McCoy, Orwall, Parker, Pike, Pollet, Seaquist and Warnick.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Hargrove.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Building Bridges.

Legislation enacted in 2007 established a Building Bridges Program (Building Bridges) to award grants to local partnerships of schools, families, and community-based organizations to develop dropout prevention and intervention systems based on community needs and resources.

A state-level workgroup was established with representatives of multiple state and local agencies and organizations, to advise the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) about the Building Bridges, and to coordinate services associated with dropout prevention. Subsequent legislation directed the workgroup to conduct several studies and make reports to the Legislature, which have been completed. The OSPI has recently renamed the workgroup as Graduation: A Team Effort (GATE).

Dropout Reengagement.

Legislation enacted in 2010 directed the OSPI to adopt rules and develop a model contract for school districts to use with community-based organizations, community or technical colleges, or Educational Service Districts (ESD) to provide dropout reengagement services for students aged 16 to 21 who have dropped out of school or are so credit deficient that completion of high school before age 21 is not an expected outcome.

A dropout reengagement program must provide academic instruction, college and work readiness preparation, case management, and resource and referral services. The OSPI rules require dropout reengagement programs to be approved before beginning operation. School districts are not required to enter a contract and may also operate their own programs. Enrolled students are funded through the regular state funding formulas.

Other Dropout Prevention Programs.

The Pay for Actual Student Success (PASS) Program was established in 2011 to provide awards to high schools based on improvement in their graduation rates. The PASS Program also provides for funding to be allocated to three other dropout prevention programs in addition to the Building Bridges: Jobs for America's Graduates, the Opportunity Internship Program, and community mentoring and leadership development offered through the College Success Foundation.

A graduation coach is defined as a staff person, working in consultation with counselors, who is assigned to identify and provide intervention services to students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school or of not graduating on time. In 2012 the OSPI convened a workgroup to develop a policy and guidelines for graduation coaches.

Educational Service Districts.

Core funding for the nine ESDs is provided based on specified basic core services that include administration, cooperative administrative and curriculum services for school districts, personnel services such as educator certification, learning resource services, professional development, and other special district needs. Other ESD activities are supported through special appropriations, contracts with school districts, and fee for service.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Building Bridges.

The purpose of the Building Bridges is to award grants to local partnerships to design and implement a K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system (System). It is clarified that the Building Bridges is a grant program, not a System.

The statutory definition of a System is made consistent by removing duplicative language. Prevention activities within a System are expanded to include tiered intervention, social-emotional and behavioral skills development, and opportunities for students to develop relationships with caring adults. Wraparound services are defined as a team-based approach to delivering services using an array of community and regional resources to address academic, social, emotional, health, and economic issues. Designing and providing wraparound services for vulnerable students is included as one of the functions of a System.

The definition of a graduation coach is changed to be an individual (rather than a staff person) who conducts certain activities and works in consultation with counselors and other staff as provided in a model policy developed by the OSPI in 2012.

The OSPI must develop a System assessment tool to support local partnerships in identifying community strengths and gaps in services, and evaluating the effectiveness of existing strategies to prevent and reengage dropouts. The OSPI must also continue development of a dropout prevention early warning and intervention system.

The state-level workgroup overseeing the Building Bridges is renamed the GATE, and assigned to establish a common vision and agenda for helping all students reach graduation. The GATE is further tasked with aligning the objectives and operation of various dropout prevention programs in support of a statewide System. The OSPI must submit a biennial report to the Legislature that includes activities undertaken and measurable indicators of progress toward achieving a System.

References to studies that have been completed are removed.

Dropout Reengagement.

The prototypical school funding formula is changed to allocate funding for students enrolled in an OSPI-approved dropout reengagement program at 1.22 times the statewide average allocation for a high school student. The ESDs that operate dropout reengagement programs under the model contract with school districts may award high school credit and issue transcripts to students.

Other Dropout Prevention Programs.

Subject to funding, the OSPI must establish a program to provide graduation coaches to high schools struggling to improve their graduation rates, and school success coaches to selected elementary and middle schools whose students attend those high schools. The OSPI must rank order all high schools based on a combination of factors, with a significant priority on graduation rates as a ranking factor. Each year the OSPI allocates funds, starting with the lowest-ranking schools, to support one graduation coach per 500 students in grades nine through 12, and one school success coach per 500 students in grades K through eight in selected elementary and middle schools.

The funds must be used to assign individuals to conduct the activities of a graduation coach or school success coach in the schools that generated the funds. Schools may also create partnerships with community-based organizations to assign individuals from the community to be coaches. Schools are eligible to continue receiving funds for three years, or until they no longer qualify based on their ranking, whichever is longer.

A school success coach is defined as an individual, working in consultation with counselors and other school staff, who is assigned to identify and provide early intervention services targeted toward elementary and middle school students to facilitate their continued enrollment, engagement, and progress in school.

Educational Service Districts.

The following responsibilities are added to basic core services to be provided by the ESDs and included in ESD budgets:

- coordinate and convene school, family, and community partnerships to develop comprehensive Systems;
- assist local partnerships in using the System assessment tool developed by the OSPI; and
- develop dropout reengagement programs to be offered under the model contract.

Subject to funding, a corps of intervention specialists is located at the ESDs to assist schools and school districts in developing various research-based models and approaches to providing early intervention and support for students.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

A graduation coach or school success coach is defined as an individual who performs certain functions, rather than a staff person or employee. Schools receiving grants for coaches may also create partnerships with community-based organizations to assign individuals from the community. A graduation coach works in consultation with counselors and other staff as provided in an OSPI model policy. The OSPI must continue development of a dropout prevention early warning and intervention system.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The efforts made by local communities and schools using the Building Bridges have made a huge difference in dropout prevention. These early intervention activities are the right things to do for kids. This bill was developed very deliberately with input from educators and staff. Getting kids to graduate is not as simple as it used to be. Graduation coaches will help, and so will intervention specialists in each ESD. Providing a tool for schools to identify students is very important. Getting between 75 and 80 percent of students to graduation is possible within current funding. For the remaining 20 percent, it takes extra resources.

The work done in Mason County has informed this bill. There was a realization that unacceptable graduation rates were not just a school performance problem, but a family and community problem. A new system was developed to provide wraparound services, flexibility, adaptability, and coordinated care for students. The problem is that there is no guaranteed funding. Multiple funding streams are woven together, but they are not stable. Partnerships are critical, including the school districts, the tribes, the faith community, and every youth and family organization in the county.

School districts cannot do this work alone. The ESDs are well situated to provide assistance through networking and specialty services. Dropout prevention remains a key aspect of the state's overall workforce development plan. Dropouts have high levels of unemployment, decreased earnings, and involvement in the criminal justice system. Leaving human capital on the table puts us a step back when hundreds of Washington businesses are looking for skilled employees. This bill capitalizes on all we know about effective dropout intervention and reengagement.

After-school programs are a fundamental tool for reducing dropouts and closing the achievement gap. This bill recognizes the importance of community organizations as well as social emotional learning. Too many people think about high school students when they talk about dropout prevention. Students drop out emotionally as early as first or second grade. The Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports program is an evidence-based best practice model that can be used for dropout prevention, but adequate resources are necessary.

Consideration should be given to allowing schools and districts to partner with community organizations for the graduation and school success coaches. These types of programs have successful outcomes and are nationally accredited to assure fidelity of implementation.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; Randy Dorn, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Kimberly Klint, Mason Matters; Lynn Nelson and Mike Hickman, Educational Service District #113; Keandra Radchenko; Justin Montermini, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Lynne Tucker, School's Out Washington; Erin Jones, Federal Way Public Schools; and Susan Richards and David Foster, Communities In Schools of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Education. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Ormsby, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Wilcox, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Carlyle, Cody, Dahlquist, Dunshee, Fagan, Green, Haigh, Haler, Harris, Hudgins, Hunt, Jinkins, Kagi, Maxwell, Morrell, Pedersen, Pettigrew, Pike, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, Springer and Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Parker and Taylor.

Staff: Jessica Harrell (786-7349).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Education:

A requirement is added that the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must continue development of a dropout early warning and intervention system within available funds. The development of a dropout system assessment tool is made subject to appropriations specific for that purpose. Null and void clauses are added to three sections. If funding is not specifically provided for graduation coaches and school success coaches to struggling schools, section 9 of the bill is null and void. If funding is not specifically provided to allocate 1.22 times the regular allocation rate for high school students in approved contracted dropout reengagement programs, section 10 of the bill is null and void. If funding is not provided for a corps of intervention specialists in the Educational Service Districts (ESDs), section 13 of the bill is null and void and the corps is not established.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Second Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, section 9 relating to coaches, section 10 relating to allocation for reengagement programs, and section 13 relating to ESDs, are null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill assumes that every child can succeed and ensures that the support for children in early learning, food assistance, and healthcare is carried through their K-12 academic experience. Students who drop out are disproportionately students of color. The extended graduation rate has hovered at just below 80 percent. We need the additional resources and the more coordinated effort that this bill calls for to capture that remaining 20 percent of children. Using early warning systems and coaches in high school keeps students in school and success coordinators in elementary and middle school ensure that children do not fall behind. Students who have left school are particularly vulnerable and in need of additional support services. Many of these students are subject to circumstances that make school attendance difficult and a low priority. They need tailored programs and intervention while they are in the K-12 system to remove such barriers and get them back into school. This bill is worth the investment and saves money in the long run. Investing in children is investing in our future. Dropout prevention is one of Superintendent of Public Instruction's top priorities. In order for students to have success in life they need a high school diploma and at least some higher education.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; Jen Estroff, Children's Alliance; Andrea Cobb, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Sharonne Navas, Equity in Education Coalition; and Melissa Gombosky, American Academy.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.