

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5856

As of February 18, 2015

Title: An act relating to creating a competitive grant program for high-quality, evidence-based outreach programs that improve high school graduation rates for college bound scholarship students.

Brief Description: Creating a competitive grant program for high-quality, evidence-based outreach programs that improve high school graduation rates for college bound scholarship students.

Sponsors: Senators Frockt, Litzow, Kohl-Welles, Pedersen, Nelson and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/17/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Matthew Lemon (786-7405)

Background: The Legislature created the College Bound Scholarship (CBS) program in 2007. CBS provides financial assistance for up to four years that covers average tuition, some fees, and a small book allowance for students who meet certain criteria and attend eligible in-state institutions of higher education. The maximum award is calculated after subtracting the value of any other state-funded aid.

The scholarship is open to seventh and eighth-grade students who qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch and sign a pledge to graduate from high school with a minimum 2.0 grade point average and no felony convictions. Students in foster care are automatically enrolled. Eligible students must have a family income of no more than 65 percent of the state median family income at the time of high school graduation. To date more than 212,000 students have applied for the program, including 90 percent of eligible eighth-grade students in the 2013-14 school year.

In 2014 the Legislature found that emerging data shows the CBS program is a success but faces long-term challenges. The Legislature established a workgroup tasked with submitting a report and recommendations for making the CBS program viable, productive, and effective. The workgroup submitted a report in December 2014 with several recommendations, including a recommendation that the Legislature should consider creating a competitive grant

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program for high-quality outreach programs that demonstrate success in improving both high school and college graduation rates.

The Legislature appropriated \$5.75 million per biennium for the College Success Foundation to provide CBS outreach to students in seventh and eighth grade as well as eleventh and twelfth grade mentoring and support services which are not restricted to CBS students.

Summary of Bill: The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must establish a competitive grant program to provide grants to high-quality, evidence-based outreach programs that offer support services for CBS students.

OSPI must develop a selection process for grant applicants by December 31, 2015. The selected programs must demonstrate success in improving high school graduation rates. OSPI must also consider programs that exhibit the following characteristics:

- intentionally focus on student success at the secondary and postsecondary levels;
- contain an evaluation process for the success of the program;
- serve students who are underrepresented in degree attainment, including but not limited to low-income students, students of color, and potential first-generation college students;
- serve middle and high-school age students;
- provide academic advising, tutoring, and mentoring services;
- offer students continuous multiyear support; and
- serve geographic regions with unmet need.

Grants must only be disbursed to 501(c) nonprofit organizations that can provide matching funds or in-kind services and may be awarded to programs developed by local coalitions to improve student outcomes.

OSPI must submit an annual report of the services provided through the grant program beginning December 1, 2016.

Appropriation: \$5 million from GF-S to OSPI for FY ending June 30, 2016, and \$5 million from GF-S to OSPI for FY ending June 30, 2017.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The data for high-school age students in the CBS program are very positive. The graduation rate for students enrolled in the CBS program is much higher than their low-income peers who are not enrolled. The CBS program involves both the higher education and K–12 systems and a key aspect of the program is the kind of supports that are provided to students who sign up in seventh and eighth grade. There are some parts of the state with great support systems that show strong results at minimal cost, but other parts of the state have little to no support. This bill can harness a relatively small amount of money to provide mentorship, support, and other

opportunities for students who work hard and do their part. This bill will help support programs that can move the needle on outcomes in K–12 and help realize the full potential of CBS.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Frockt, prime sponsor; Juliette Schindler Kelly, College Success Foundation; Frank Ordway, League of Education Voters.