
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5850

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Braun, Wellman, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Mullet, Randall, Torres, Valdez, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to supporting students who are chronically absent
2 and at risk for not graduating high school; amending RCW 28A.175.025,
3 28A.175.035, and 28A.175.105; and adding a new section to chapter
4 28A.310 RCW.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.310
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
9 specific purpose, each educational service district must work in
10 collaboration with the office of the superintendent of public
11 instruction to develop and maintain the capacity to offer training
12 and coaching for educators and other school district staff, including
13 those designated under RCW 28A.225.026 to address excessive
14 absenteeism and truancy, on the development of robust early warning
15 systems to identify and locate students who are chronically absent
16 and connect them with the necessary supports to reengage them in
17 academic learning. The training and coaching must include collecting,
18 analyzing, and reporting early warning data, including attendance and
19 other relevant data.

20 (2) For the purposes of this section:

1 (a) "Necessary supports" may include engagement with families;
2 academic, systemic, and economic supports; adequate and appropriate
3 clothing; food and nutrition; transportation; connecting students to
4 behavioral and physical health supports; and incentives and
5 celebrations of students' attendance and engagement in the classroom.

6 (b) "Students who are chronically absent" means students who miss
7 10 percent or more of their school days for any reason including
8 excused and unexcused absences and suspensions.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.175.025 and 2007 c 408 s 2 are each amended to
10 read as follows:

11 (1) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this
12 specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public
13 instruction shall create a grant program and award grants to local
14 partnerships of schools, families, and communities (~~to begin the~~
15 ~~phase in of~~) for a statewide comprehensive dropout prevention,
16 intervention, and retrieval system including supports for students
17 who are chronically absent. This program shall be known as the
18 building bridges program.

19 (~~(1)~~) (2) For purposes of RCW 28A.175.025 through 28A.175.075,
20 a "building bridges program" means a local partnership of schools,
21 families, and communities that either provides the supports under
22 subsection (3) of this section or provides all of the following
23 programs or activities under this subsection, or both:

24 (a) A system that identifies individual students at risk of
25 dropping out from middle through high school based on local
26 predictive data, including state assessment data starting in the
27 fourth grade, and provides timely interventions for such students and
28 for dropouts (~~(, including a plan for educational success as already~~
29 ~~required by the student learning plan as defined under RCW~~
30 ~~28A.655.061)~~). Students identified shall include foster care youth,
31 youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and students receiving
32 special education services under chapter 28A.155 RCW;

33 (b) Coaches or mentors for students as necessary;

34 (c) Staff responsible for coordination of community partners that
35 provide a seamless continuum of academic and nonacademic support in
36 schools and communities;

37 (d) Retrieval or reentry activities; and

1 (e) Alternative educational programming, including, but not
2 limited to, career and technical education exploratory and
3 preparatory programs and online learning opportunities.

4 ~~((2) One of the grants awarded under this section shall be for a
5 two-year demonstration project focusing on providing fifth through
6 twelfth grade students with a program that utilizes technology and is
7 integrated with state standards, basic academics, cross-cultural
8 exposures, and age-appropriate preemployment training. The project
9 shall:~~

10 ~~(a) Establish programs in two western Washington and one eastern
11 Washington urban areas;~~

12 ~~(b) Identify at-risk students in each of the distinct communities
13 and populations and implement strategies to close the achievement
14 gap;~~

15 ~~(c) Collect and report data on participant characteristics and
16 outcomes of the project, including the characteristics and outcomes
17 specified under RCW 28A.175.035(1)(e); and~~

18 ~~(d) Submit a report to the legislature by December 1, 2009))~~

19 (3) When community-based organizations, tribes, and community and
20 technical colleges are awarded grants to support students who are
21 chronically absent under this section, grant funds may also be used
22 for the following strategies and supports:

23 (a) Proactive engagement with all families about the impact of
24 attendance on student outcomes;

25 (b) Clear, supportive, and solution-oriented communication with
26 families and caregivers of students who are chronically absent;

27 (c) Visits to families of students who are chronically absent;

28 (d) Academic, systemic, and economic supports for the families of
29 students who are chronically absent, including removing barriers to
30 students attending school as well as tutoring and mentoring students
31 who are reengaging in the classroom;

32 (e) Connecting students to behavioral and physical health
33 supports; and

34 (f) Incentives and celebrations of students' improved attendance
35 and engagement in the classroom.

36 (4) For the purposes of this section, "students who are
37 chronically absent" has the same meaning as in section 1 of this act.

38 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.175.035 and 2011 c 288 s 9 are each amended to
39 read as follows:

1 (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall:
2 (a) Identify criteria for grants and evaluate proposals for
3 funding in consultation with the workforce training and education
4 coordinating board;
5 (b) Develop and monitor requirements for grant recipients to:
6 (i) Identify students who (~~both fail the Washington assessment~~
7 ~~of student learning~~) score below basic on the statewide student
8 assessment as defined in RCW 28A.655.230 and drop out of school;
9 (ii) Identify their own strengths and gaps in services provided
10 to youth;
11 (iii) Set their own local goals for program outcomes;
12 (iv) Use research-based and emerging best practices that lead to
13 positive outcomes in implementing the building bridges program; and
14 (v) Coordinate an outreach campaign to bring public and private
15 organizations together and to provide information about the building
16 bridges program to the local community;
17 (c) In setting the requirements under (b) of this subsection,
18 encourage creativity and provide for flexibility in implementing the
19 local building bridges program;
20 (d) Identify and disseminate successful practices; and
21 (e) Develop requirements for grant recipients to collect and
22 report data, including, but not limited to:
23 (i) The number of and demographics of students served including,
24 but not limited to, information regarding a student's race and
25 ethnicity, a student's household income, a student's housing status,
26 whether a student is a foster youth or youth involved in the juvenile
27 justice system, whether a student is disabled, and the primary
28 language spoken at a student's home;
29 (ii) (~~Washington assessment of student learning~~) Statewide
30 student assessment scores;
31 (iii) Dropout rates;
32 (iv) On-time graduation rates;
33 (v) Extended graduation rates;
34 (vi) Credentials obtained;
35 (vii) Absenteeism rates;
36 (viii) Truancy rates; and
37 (ix) Credit retrieval(~~+~~
38 ~~(f) Contract with a third party to evaluate the infrastructure~~
39 ~~and implementation of the partnership including the leveraging of~~
40 ~~outside resources that relate to the goal of the partnership. The~~

1 ~~third-party contractor shall also evaluate the performance and~~
2 ~~effectiveness of the partnerships relative to the type of entity, as~~
3 ~~identified in RCW 28A.175.045, serving as the lead agency for the~~
4 ~~partnership; and~~

5 ~~(g) Report to the legislature by December 1, 2008).~~

6 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may
7 require the recipient of grant funding under RCW 28A.175.025 to
8 report the impacts of the recipient's efforts in alignment with the
9 measures of the Washington school improvement framework.

10 (3) In performing its duties under this section, the office of
11 the superintendent of public instruction is encouraged to consult
12 with the ((work group identified)) graduation: a team effort
13 partnership advisory committee established in RCW 28A.175.075.

14 ~~((3))~~ (4) In selecting recipients for grant funds appropriated
15 under RCW 28A.175.135, the office of the superintendent of public
16 instruction shall use a streamlined and expedited application and
17 review process for those programs that have already proven to be
18 successful in dropout prevention.

19 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.175.105 and 2021 c 164 s 7 are each amended to
20 read as follows:

21 The definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 28A.175.100
22 through 28A.175.110 unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

23 (1) "Dropout reengagement program" means an educational program
24 that offers at least the following instruction and services:

25 (a) Academic instruction, including but not limited to
26 preparation to earn a high school equivalency certificate as provided
27 in RCW 28B.50.536 in accordance with rules adopted under RCW
28 28A.305.190, academic skills instruction, and college and work
29 readiness preparation, that generates credits that can be applied to
30 a high school diploma from the student's school district or from a
31 community or technical college under RCW 28B.50.535 and has the goal
32 of enabling the student to obtain the academic and work readiness
33 skills necessary for employment or postsecondary study. A dropout
34 reengagement program is not required to offer instruction in only
35 those subject areas where a student is deficient in accumulated
36 credits. Academic instruction must be provided by teachers certified
37 by the Washington professional educator standards board or by
38 instructors employed by a community or technical college whose
39 required credentials are established by the college;

1 (b) Case management, academic and career counseling, and
2 assistance with accessing services and resources that support at-risk
3 youth and reduce barriers to educational success, such as:

4 (i) Academic related supports, such as covering test fees,
5 calculators, and laboratory and other school supplies;

6 (ii) Nonacademic supports, such as adequate and appropriate
7 clothing; adequate and reliable access to food and nutrition; and
8 transportation, including bus passes, gas vouchers, and subsidized
9 parking; and

10 (iii) Connecting students to behavioral and physical health
11 supports; and

12 (c) If the program provider is a community or technical college,
13 the opportunity for qualified students to enroll in college courses
14 that lead to a postsecondary degree or certificate. The college may
15 not charge an eligible student tuition for such enrollment.

16 (2) "Eligible student" means a student who:

17 (a) Is at least sixteen but less than twenty-one years of age at
18 the beginning of the school year;

19 (b) Is not accumulating sufficient credits toward a high school
20 diploma to reasonably complete a high school diploma from a public
21 school before the age of twenty-one or is recommended for the program
22 by case managers from the department of social and health services or
23 the juvenile justice system; and

24 (c) Is enrolled or enrolls in the school district in which the
25 student resides, or is enrolled or enrolls in an institutional
26 education program as defined in RCW 28A.190.005 or a nonresident
27 school district under RCW 28A.225.220 through 28A.225.230.

28 (3) "Full-time equivalent eligible student" means an eligible
29 student whose enrollment and attendance meet criteria adopted by the
30 office of the superintendent of public instruction specifically for
31 dropout reengagement programs. The criteria shall be:

32 (a) Based on the community or technical college credits generated
33 by the student if the program provider is a community or technical
34 college; and

35 (b) Based on a minimum amount of planned programming or
36 instruction and minimum attendance by the student rather than hours
37 of seat time if the program provider is a community-based
38 organization.

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