
Postsecondary Education & Workforce Committee

HB 1557

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington guaranteed admissions program and requiring student notifications.

Sponsors: Representatives Reed, Salahuddin, Scott, Morgan, Street, Ramel, Walen, Macri, Berry, Obras, Bernbaum, Fosse, Mena, Bergquist, Ortiz-Self, Lekanoff, Duerr, Ryu, Leavitt, Gregerson, Parshley, Kloba, Goodman, Peterson, Zahn, Pollet and Doglio.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes the Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program.

Hearing Date: 2/5/25

Staff: Saranda Ross (786-7068).

Background:

Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program.

The Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program (WAGAP) supports guaranteed admissions efforts at the following participating institutions of higher education: Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, The Evergreen State College, University of Washington Tacoma, Washington State University, and Western Washington University. There are over 131 combined public school districts and school partners participating in the WAGAP.

Guaranteed admissions offers admission to a student and then requires the student to apply to the institution, as opposed to general admissions which requires a student to first apply to the institution and then potentially be offered admission. Guaranteed admissions do not guarantee enrollment in a specific degree program.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

To be eligible for the WAGAP, students must:

- earn a 3.0 cumulative GPA; and
- complete all of Washington's College Academic Distribution Requirements.

Washington's College Academic Distribution Requirements are the minimum number of high school course credits required in six subject areas to meet state minimum admission standards at Washington public four-year institutions. Washington's College Academic Distribution Requirements include:

English	Four credits
Math	Three credits
Science	Three credits
Social Sciences	Three credits
World Language	Two credits
Art	One credit
Senior Year Math-based Quantitative Course	One credit

The Council of Presidents.

The Council of Presidents (COP) is a voluntary association of Washington's six public four-year institutions of higher education. The COP works to advance collaboration, cooperation, and efficiency across public four-year institutions.

Washington Student Achievement Council.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is a state agency consisting of nine voting members. The WSAC provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and program administration to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment. The Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office) operates within the WSAC. The Office administers state and federal financial aid and other education service programs

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matters pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) have numerous and broad responsibilities prescribed in statute, including:

- making rules and regulations necessary for the administration of public education requirements;
- preparing courses of study and other materials and books for the discharge of education duties;
- fulfilling financial responsibilities, including distributing legislatively allocated funds to

districts for the operation of the public school system, and awarding numerous state and federally funded grants; and

- satisfying numerous reporting and other duties assigned by the Legislature.

Washington School Counselor Association.

The Washington School Counselor Association (Association) is a professional organization that represents over 1,000 school counselors, school counselor educators, and graduate students in Washington. The Association works to further develop Professional School Counselors' expertise.

Charter Schools.

Charter schools are privately run public schools that operate according to the terms of renewable five-year charter contracts that establish the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations of the parties to the contracts. Charter schools are alternatives to traditional public schools and are operated and funded separately from the traditional public school system. Charter schools are required by law to be tuition-free and open to all children and may offer any program or course of study that any other public school may offer.

Institutional Education Provider.

An institutional education provider is a school district or other entity providing education services to youth in an institutional education facility, for example, a county juvenile detention center or a state long-term juvenile institution.

State-Tribal Education Compact Schools.

State-tribal education compact schools are public schools that are governed and operated according to the terms and conditions of a compact. The compacts, which must meet requirements established in statute and through administrative rules established by the SPI, are negotiated between the SPI and the governing body of a tribe in Washington or the governing body of a school in the state that is funded by the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, or a tribal consortium.

Summary of Bill:

The WAGAP is established. In consultation with the WSAC and the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the COP must determine and annually review eligibility criteria.

Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, the following institutions of higher education must continue or begin participating in the WAGAP:

- at least one University of Washington campus;
- at least one Washington State University campus;
- Western Washington University at Bellingham;
- Central Washington University at Ellensburg;
- Eastern Washington University at Cheney;

- The Evergreen State College; and
- Northwest Indian College.

These institutions may opt out of the WAGAP by reporting to the Legislature the reason for opting out and a detailed overview of other initiatives for improving admissions and expanding access to the institution for resident students.

By January 1, 2026, school districts, charter schools, state-tribal education compact schools, and institutional education providers with students in grade 11 or 12 must enter into data sharing agreements with each participating institution or the Washington School Information Processing Cooperative (WSIPC) to facilitate the transfer of qualified student data. Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, school districts, charter schools, state-tribal education compact schools, and institutional education providers must work with the WSIPC and the COP to facilitate the transfer of this student data.

Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, the WSIPC must collect data of eleventh and twelfth grade students who meet the WAGAP eligibility criteria. The WSIPC must transmit this data to the COP to make available to participating institutions for the purpose of guaranteeing admission to qualified applicants under the WAGAP.

Beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, participating institutions must simplify and streamline the general admissions application form, requiring only necessary information for students.

The WSAC must collaborate with the OSPI, the COP, the SBCTC, education service districts, the WSIPC, and the Association to create a notice providing information about the following programs:

- the WAGAP;
- the Washington College Grant;
- dual credit programs;
- career and technical education programs;
- associate degrees and certificates;
- the Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and
- the Washington Application for State Financial Aid.

The OSPI must work with the WSAC to disseminate the notice to school districts, charter schools, state-tribal education compact schools, and institutional education providers with students in grade 9 through 12. Beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, these entities must:

- disseminate the notice to students in grades 9 through 12 and their parents or guardians at the beginning of each school year; and
- designate a staff member or create a virtual resource for students to learn more about the information contained in the notice.

Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, each school district, charter school, state-tribal education compact school, and institutional education provider with students in grade 11 or 12

must collaborate with the WSIPC and the COP to create a notice about the WAGAP and general admissions for dissemination to students in grades 11 and 12 and their parents and guardians. The notice must provide a parent or guardian with an opportunity to opt their student out of the WAGAP.

From December 2027 to 2032, the COP must annually report to the Legislature the eligibility criteria and changes made to the WAGAP and the following information disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, Title I status of the high school attended, and economic status:

- the number of students offered admission by each participating institution;
- the postsecondary enrollment rates of students offered guaranteed admissions by each participating institution;
- the postsecondary application and enrollment rates of students who were offered guaranteed admissions within 0.2 grade point average of the eligibility cutoff; and
- the postsecondary application and enrollment rates of students who were not offered guaranteed admissions because their grade point average was below the eligibility cutoff by 0.2 grade point average or less.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2025.

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