

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5308

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As of January 23, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to making higher education more accessible by establishing the Washington guaranteed admissions program and requiring student notifications.

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

**Sponsors:** Senators Hansen, Hasegawa, Krishnadasan, Lias, Nobles, Slatter and Valdez.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/23/25.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Establishes the Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program (WAGAP).
- Requires data sharing agreements between secondary school and postsecondary schools through the Washington School Information Processing Cooperative.
- Requires notices and notifications for certain students at high schools at certain times of the year.
- Requires a report on WAGAP annually from December 2027 until December 2032.

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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Staff:** Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

**Background:** Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program. The Washington Guaranteed

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*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.*

Admissions Program (WAGAP), established and administered by the Washington State Council of Presidents (COP), provides notice to students of admission to certain public universities before applying. Those six institutions include: Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, The Evergreen State College, University of Washington Tacoma, Washington State University, and Western Washington University.

To have guaranteed admission, a student must have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA, be on track to meet all the minimum core academic course requirements a student must have completed for college admission—College Academic Distribution Requirements—and be from a school in a school district that is participating in WAGAP.

Council of Presidents. COP is an organization representing the presidents of the public four-year institutions of higher education in Washington State.

Washington School Information Processing Cooperative. The Washington School Information Processing Cooperative (WSIPC) is a public, nonprofit cooperative that provides K-12 public and private schools with certain services including data reporting, technology services, building partnerships between agencies, a purchasing program, and software support.

**Summary of Bill:** The Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program is Established.

Beginning with the 2026-27 academic year, regional universities, The Evergreen State College, at least one campus of each state university, and tribal institutions of higher education, must participate in WAGAP. Participating institutions shall simplify and streamline the general admissions application form. An institution may opt out if they provide:

- the reason for opting out in writing; and
- a detailed overview of other initiatives the institution has for improving admissions and expanding access to the institution for resident students.

The COP shall:

- determine eligibility criteria for the WAGAP and review it annually;
- hold and make the information available to participating institutions for the purpose of guaranteeing admission to qualified applicants; and
- submit a report on WAGAP to the appropriate committees of the Legislature annually beginning December 10, 2027, until December 31, 2032, on certain information regarding admissions, postsecondary application and enrollment offerings, and rates of students who are not offered guaranteed admissions.

Notice on Certain Washington State Programs. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) shall collaborate with Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), COP, and other stakeholders must create a notice providing information about:

- WAGAP;

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

OSPI must work with school districts, and others, in sending out the notice.

By the 2025-26 school year, each school district and other institutions with students grades 9 through 12, must then disseminate the notice created by WSAC and stakeholders each November, as well as designate a staff person to be a resource for students on the items contained in the notice.

Data Sharing. By January 1, 2026, the WSIPC must enter into data sharing agreements with institutions participating in WAGAP and collect and transmit the data of students in grades 11 and 12 from secondary schools who meet the criteria for WAGAP.

The Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program Notification. By the 2026-27 school year, each school district and others with students in grades 11 and 12, must collaborate with the WSIPC and participating four-year institutions through the COP to create a notification on WAGAP. Parents of a student may opt out of the notification.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 18, 2025.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: There are tens of thousands of students who qualify for WAGAP. This codifies a current program run by the Council of Presidents. This will let students know that they are already admitted to the state institutions of higher education. The way the work is done currently is very time intensive. The data work done by the WSIPC will save time and help this program succeed. There are barriers to some Washingtonians to higher education. The opacity of the admissions process is a problem. Idaho has been running a similar program since 2015. This is an evidence-based program which will make a difference.

If a student shows an appetite for learning, this will provide them with the knowledge that college is available to them. This bill will establish a better connection between K-12 and higher ed.

WSIPC was created by the nine Educational Service Districts. The barriers to students, and institutions, is real. WSIPC is in the middle of a pilot with data sharing right now. This pilot is showing that the barriers to data sharing can be removed. WSIPC has cyber security measures in place, and are extensively audited.

OTHER: The Legislature has passed several directives to OSPI regarding notices. The existing systems should be leveraged and aligned. The committee should reconsider the notice before passing the bill.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Drew Hansen, Prime Sponsor; Jacob Vigdor, University of Washington Faculty; Daniel Glowitz; Dana Anderson, Washington School Information Processing Cooperative; Bill Lyne Lyne, United Faculty of Washington State and Council of Faculty; Melissa Beard, Council of Presidents.

OTHER: Misha Cherniske, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.