
SENATE BILL 5841

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senators Boehnke, Dozier, and Nobles

Prefiled 12/05/25. Read first time 01/12/26. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to the completion of postsecondary financial aid
2 applications; and amending RCW 28A.230.212 and 28A.300.815.

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

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.230.212 and 2024 c 66 s 7 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (1) Each student must have a high school and beyond plan to guide
7 the student's high school experience and inform course taking that is
8 aligned with the student's goals for education or training and career
9 after high school.

10 (2) (a) By grade seven, each student must be administered a career
11 interest and skills inventory which is intended to be used to inform
12 grade eight course taking and development of an initial high school
13 and beyond plan. No later than grade eight, each student must have
14 begun development of a high school and beyond plan that includes a
15 proposed plan for first-year high school courses aligned with
16 graduation requirements and secondary and postsecondary goals.

17 (b) For each student who has not earned a score of level 3 or 4
18 on the middle school mathematics assessment identified in RCW
19 28A.655.070 by grade nine, the high school and beyond plan must be
20 updated to ensure that the student takes a mathematics course in both
21 grades nine and 10. These courses may include career and technical

1 education equivalencies in mathematics adopted pursuant to RCW
2 28A.230.097.

3 (3) With staff support, students must update their high school
4 and beyond plan annually, at a minimum, to review academic progress
5 and inform future course taking.

6 (a) The high school and beyond plan must be updated in grade 10
7 to reflect high school assessment results in RCW 28A.655.061, ensure
8 student access to advanced course options per the district's academic
9 acceleration policy in RCW 28A.320.195, assess progress toward
10 identified goals, and revised as necessary for changing interests,
11 goals, and needs.

12 (b) Each school district shall provide students who have not met
13 the standard on state assessments or who are behind in completion of
14 credits or graduation pathway options with the opportunity to access
15 interventions and academic supports, courses, or both, designed to
16 enable students to meet all high school graduation requirements. The
17 parents or legal guardians shall be notified about these
18 opportunities as included in the student's high school and beyond
19 plan, preferably through a student-led conference, including the
20 parents or legal guardians, and at least annually until the student
21 is on track to graduate.

22 (c) For students with an individualized education program, the
23 high school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in
24 alignment with their school to postschool transition plan. The high
25 school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in a similar
26 manner and with similar school personnel as for all other students.

27 (4) School districts shall involve parents and legal guardians to
28 the greatest extent feasible in the process of developing and
29 updating the high school and beyond plan.

30 (a) High school and beyond plans must be provided to students and
31 their parents or legal guardians in a language the students and
32 parents or legal guardians understand and in accordance with the
33 school district's language access policy and procedures as required
34 under chapter 28A.183 RCW, which may require language assistance for
35 students and parents or legal guardians with limited English
36 proficiency.

37 (b) School districts must annually provide students in grades
38 eight through 12, and their parents or legal guardians, with
39 comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options
40 offered by the district and are strongly encouraged to begin

1 providing this information to students in grade six. School districts
2 must provide this information in a manner that conforms with the
3 school district's language access policy and procedures as required
4 under chapter 28A.183 RCW.

5 (5) School districts are strongly encouraged to partner with
6 student serving, community-based organizations that support career
7 and college exploration and preparation for postsecondary and career
8 pathways. Partnerships may include high school and beyond plan
9 coordination and planning, data-sharing agreements, and safe and
10 secure access to individual student's high school and beyond plans.

11 (6) All high school and beyond plans must, at a minimum, include
12 the following elements:

13 (a) Identification of career goals and interests, aided by a
14 skills and interest assessment;

15 (b) Identification of secondary and postsecondary education and
16 training goals;

17 (c) An academic plan for course taking that:

18 (i) Informs students about course options for satisfying state
19 and local graduation requirements;

20 (ii) Satisfies state and local graduation requirements;

21 (iii) Aligns with the student's secondary and postsecondary
22 goals, which can include education, training, and career preparation;

23 (iv) Identifies available advanced course sequences per the
24 school district's academic acceleration policy, as described in RCW
25 28A.320.195, that include dual credit courses or other programs and
26 are aligned with the student's postsecondary goals;

27 (v) Informs students about the potential impacts of their course
28 selections on postsecondary opportunities;

29 (vi) Identifies available career and technical education
30 equivalency courses that can satisfy core subject area graduation
31 requirements under RCW 28A.230.097;

32 (vii) If applicable, identifies career and technical education
33 and work-based learning opportunities that can lead to technical
34 college certifications and apprenticeships; and

35 (viii) If applicable, identifies opportunities for credit
36 recovery and acceleration, including partial and mastery-based credit
37 accrual to eliminate barriers for on-time grade level progression and
38 graduation per RCW 28A.320.192;

1 (d) Evidence that the student has received the following
2 information on federal and state financial aid programs that help pay
3 for the costs of a postsecondary program:

4 (i) The college bound scholarship program established in chapter
5 28B.118 RCW, the Washington college grant created in RCW 28B.92.200,
6 and other scholarship opportunities;

7 (ii) The documentation necessary for completing state and federal
8 financial aid applications; application timeliness and submission
9 deadlines; and the importance of submitting applications early;

10 (iii) Information specific to students who are or have been the
11 subject of a dependency proceeding pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW, who
12 are or are at risk of being homeless, and whose family member or
13 legal guardian will be required to provide financial and tax
14 information necessary to complete applications;

15 (iv) Opportunities to participate in advising days and seminars
16 that assist students and, when necessary, their parents or legal
17 guardians, with filling out financial aid applications in accordance
18 with RCW 28A.300.815; and

19 (v) A sample financial aid letter and a link to the financial aid
20 calculator created in RCW 28B.77.280; (~~and~~)

21 (e) Evidence that the student has completed at least one state or
22 federal financial aid application or that their parent or legal
23 guardian has opted the student out of this requirement; and

24 (f) By the end of grade 12, a current resume or activity log that
25 provides a written compilation of the student's education, any work
26 experience, extracurricular activities, and any community service
27 including how the school district has recognized the community
28 service pursuant to RCW 28A.320.193.

29 (7) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board of
30 education's requirements for a high school and beyond plan shall
31 remain at the local level, and a school district may establish
32 additional, local requirements for a high school and beyond plan to
33 serve the needs and interests of its students and the purposes of
34 this section.

35 (8) The state board of education shall adopt rules to implement
36 this section.

37 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.300.815 and 2020 c 307 s 5 are each amended to
38 read as follows:

1 (1) (a) Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, within existing
2 resources, and in collaboration with the Washington student
3 achievement council, the office of the superintendent of public
4 instruction shall coordinate a financial aid advising day with all
5 school districts with a high school.

6 (b) For the purposes of this section and RCW 28A.230.310, a
7 "financial aid advising day" means a day or series of days between
8 September 1st and December 1st of each year that includes, but is not
9 limited to, dedicated time during regular school hours for staff to:

10 (i) Provide information to twelfth grade students on the free
11 application for federal student aid, the Washington application for
12 state financial aid, and the college board's CSS profile;

13 (ii) As appropriate and whenever possible, assist twelfth grade
14 students in completing the free application for federal student aid
15 and the Washington application for state financial aid; and

16 (iii) In conjunction with the Washington student achievement
17 council, distribute information on the Washington college grant and
18 demonstrate the use of the college financial aid calculator created
19 in RCW 28B.77.280.

20 (c) Each school district may choose the date or series of dates
21 on which to hold a financial aid advising day.

22 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
23 coordinate with the Washington student achievement council whenever
24 possible to assist districts in facilitating opportunities outside of
25 regular school hours for parents to take part in seminars on
26 completing the free application for federal student aid and the
27 Washington application for state financial aid. Whenever possible,
28 districts shall provide spoken language interpreter services for
29 limited English-speaking families.

30 (3) Schools must allow students over the age of eighteen to opt
31 out and parents or guardians of students under the age of eighteen to
32 opt their student out of scheduled financial aid advising day
33 activities.

34 (4) A student may not be penalized for (~~failing to complete~~
35 ~~financial aid applications or for~~) opting out of activities under
36 subsection (3) of this section.

37 (5) Educational staff, including instructional, administrative,
38 and counseling staff, may not be assessed or penalized on the basis
39 of students' completion of financial aid forms or students' decisions
40 to opt out under subsection (3) of this section.

1 (6) In the administration of the financial aid advising day,
2 personally identifiable student or family information must be
3 protected in accordance with state and federal privacy laws.

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