
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5969

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Cortes, Hasegawa, Nobles, Shewmake, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 01/22/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to reducing duplication between high school and
2 beyond plans and individualized education program transition plans;
3 and amending RCW 28A.155.275, 28A.230.212, and 28A.155.220.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.155.275 and 2025 c 368 s 3 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The superintendent of public instruction shall develop and
8 maintain a statewide online system for individualized education
9 programs. In developing and implementing the online system, the
10 superintendent of public instruction must collaborate with
11 educational service districts or an information processing
12 cooperative established under chapter 28A.310 RCW by agreement
13 pursuant to chapter 39.34 RCW. The superintendent may delegate
14 implementation of the online system as authorized under RCW
15 28A.310.470.

16 (2) The purpose of the online system is to:

17 (a) Provide a uniform, centralized platform for creating and
18 managing individualized education programs;

19 (b) Ensure compliance with federal and state special education
20 requirements;

1 (c) Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of individualized
2 education program development and oversight; and

3 (d) Improve educator collaboration and serve as an instructional
4 tool designed to improve educational outcomes by aligning
5 individualized supports and services with evidence-based
6 instructional practices.

7 (3) The online system must:

8 (a) Have a statewide model that is made available at no cost to
9 school districts, charter schools established under chapter 28A.710
10 RCW, and state-tribal education compact schools subject to chapter
11 28A.715 RCW;

12 (b) Incorporate safeguards to protect confidential student
13 information, including compliance with the federal family educational
14 rights and privacy act and any other applicable privacy laws;

15 (c) Allow for secure, role-based access so that only authorized
16 users may view or modify individualized education programs;

17 (d) Be able to integrate emerging technologies to continually
18 enhance its functionality and effectiveness;

19 (e) Be able to integrate a student's transition plan as developed
20 under RCW 28A.155.220 with the universal online high school and
21 beyond plan platform as developed under RCW 28A.230.215, to the
22 greatest extent possible, in order to relieve duplication between the
23 two plans;

24 (f) Ensure that individualized education programs can show
25 evidence of access to grade-level standards, reasonable progress,
26 improved student outcomes, and students' strengths and needs;

27 ~~((f))~~ (g) Include integrated language support and translation
28 services;

29 ~~((g))~~ (h) Allow for robust family engagement, including access
30 to information about student progress that includes both qualitative
31 and quantitative data and that provides information about how
32 individualized education program goals connect to grade-level
33 standards; and

34 ~~((h))~~ (i) Comply with applicable state and federal
35 accessibility standards.

36 (4) The superintendent of public instruction shall ensure
37 statewide professional development opportunities are available to
38 educators, administrators, and families to support the effective use
39 and implementation of the statewide online system for individualized
40 education programs, including targeted technical assistance.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.230.212 and 2024 c 66 s 7 are each amended to
2 read as follows:

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

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

14 (b) For each student who has not earned a score of level 3 or 4
15 on the middle school mathematics assessment identified in RCW
16 28A.655.070 by grade nine, the high school and beyond plan must be
17 updated to ensure that the student takes a mathematics course in both
18 grades nine and 10. These courses may include career and technical
19 education equivalencies in mathematics adopted pursuant to RCW
20 28A.230.097.

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

24 (a) The high school and beyond plan must be updated in grade 10
25 to reflect high school assessment results (~~(in RCW 28A.655.061)~~)
26 under RCW 28A.655.070(3), ensure student access to advanced course
27 options per the district's academic acceleration policy in RCW
28 28A.320.195, assess progress toward identified goals, and (~~(revised)~~)
29 revise as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs.

30 (b) Each school district shall provide students who have not met
31 the standard on state assessments or who are behind in completion of
32 credits or graduation pathway options with the opportunity to access
33 interventions and academic supports, courses, or both, designed to
34 enable students to meet all high school graduation requirements. The
35 parents or legal guardians shall be notified about these
36 opportunities as included in the student's high school and beyond
37 plan, preferably through a student-led conference, including the
38 parents or legal guardians, and at least annually until the student
39 is on track to graduate.

1 (c) For students with an individualized education program, the
2 high school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in
3 alignment with their school to postschool transition plan. The high
4 school and beyond plan must be (i) developed and updated in a similar
5 manner and with similar school personnel as for all other students
6 and (ii) integrated with the statewide online system for
7 individualized education programs developed under RCW 28A.155.275, to
8 the greatest extent possible, in order to relieve duplication between
9 the two plans.

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

13 (a) High school and beyond plans must be provided to students and
14 their parents or legal guardians in a language the students and
15 parents or legal guardians understand and in accordance with the
16 school district's language access policy and procedures as required
17 under chapter 28A.183 RCW, which may require language assistance for
18 students and parents or legal guardians with limited English
19 proficiency.

20 (b) School districts must annually provide students in grades
21 eight through 12, and their parents or legal guardians, with
22 comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options
23 offered by the district and are strongly encouraged to begin
24 providing this information to students in grade six. School districts
25 must provide this information in a manner that conforms with the
26 school district's language access policy and procedures as required
27 under chapter 28A.183 RCW.

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

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

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

38 (b) Identification of secondary and postsecondary education and
39 training goals;

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

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

3 (ii) Satisfies state and local graduation requirements;

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

6 (iv) Identifies available advanced course sequences per the
7 school district's academic acceleration policy, as described in RCW
8 28A.320.195, that include dual credit courses or other programs and
9 are aligned with the student's postsecondary goals;

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

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

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

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

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

25 (i) The college bound scholarship program established in chapter
26 28B.118 RCW, the Washington college grant created in RCW 28B.92.200,
27 and other scholarship opportunities;

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

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

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

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

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

8 (7) Any decision on whether a student has met the state board of
9 education's requirements for a high school and beyond plan shall
10 remain at the local level, and a school district may establish
11 additional, local requirements for a high school and beyond plan to
12 serve the needs and interests of its students and the purposes of
13 this section.

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

16 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.155.220 and 2025 c 256 s 6 are each amended to
17 read as follows:

18 (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must
19 establish interagency agreements with the department of social and
20 health services, the department of services for the blind, and any
21 other state agency that provides high school transition services for
22 special education students. Such interagency agreements shall not
23 interfere with existing individualized education programs, nor
24 override any individualized education program team's decision-making
25 power. The purpose of the interagency agreements is to foster
26 effective collaboration among the multiple agencies providing
27 transition services for individualized education program-eligible
28 special education students from the beginning of transition planning,
29 as soon as educationally and developmentally appropriate, through the
30 end of the school year in which the student turns 22 years of age, or
31 through high school graduation, whichever occurs first. Interagency
32 agreements are also intended to streamline services and programs,
33 promote efficiencies, and establish a uniform focus on improved
34 outcomes related to self-sufficiency.

35 (2)(a) When educationally and developmentally appropriate, the
36 interagency responsibilities and linkages with transition services
37 under subsection (1) of this section must be addressed in a
38 transition plan to a postsecondary setting in the individualized
39 education program of a student with disabilities.

1 (b) Transition planning shall be based upon educationally and
2 developmentally appropriate transition assessments that outline the
3 student's individual needs, strengths, preferences, and interests.
4 Transition assessments may include observations, interviews,
5 inventories, situational assessments, formal and informal
6 assessments, as well as academic assessments.

7 (c) The transition services that the transition plan must address
8 include activities needed to assist the student in reaching
9 postsecondary goals and courses of study to support postsecondary
10 goals.

11 (d) Transition activities that the transition plan may address
12 include instruction, related services, community experience,
13 employment and other adult living objectives, daily living skills,
14 and functional vocational evaluation.

15 (e) When educationally and developmentally appropriate, a
16 discussion must take place with the student and parents, and others
17 as needed, to determine the postsecondary goals or postschool vision
18 for the student. This discussion may be included as part of an annual
19 individualized education program review, high school and beyond plan
20 meeting, or any other meeting that includes parents, students, and
21 educators. The postsecondary goals included in the transition plan
22 shall be goals that are measurable and must be based on appropriate
23 transition assessments related to training, education, employment,
24 and independent living skills, when necessary. The goals must also be
25 based on the student's needs, while considering the strengths,
26 preferences, and interests of the student.

27 (f) As the student gets older, changes in the transition plan may
28 be noted in the annual update of the student's individualized
29 education program.

30 (g) (~~(A transition plan required)~~) When a student with a required
31 transition plan under this subsection (2) elects to have both a
32 transition plan and a high school and beyond plan under RCW
33 28A.230.212, the transition plan must be aligned with ((a)) the
34 student's high school and beyond plan.

35 (3) To the extent that data is available through data-sharing
36 agreements established by the education data center under RCW
37 43.41.400, the education data center must monitor the following
38 outcomes for individualized education program-eligible special
39 education students after high school graduation:

1 (a) The number of students who, within one year of high school
2 graduation:

3 (i) Enter integrated employment paid at the greater of minimum
4 wage or competitive wage for the type of employment, with access to
5 related employment and health benefits; or

6 (ii) Enter a postsecondary education or training program focused
7 on leading to integrated employment;

8 (b) The wages and number of hours worked per pay period;

9 (c) The impact of employment on any state and federal benefits
10 for individuals with disabilities;

11 (d) Indicators of the types of settings in which students who
12 previously received transition services primarily reside;

13 (e) Indicators of improved economic status and self-sufficiency;

14 (f) Data on those students for whom a postsecondary or integrated
15 employment outcome does not occur within one year of high school
16 graduation, including:

17 (i) Information on the reasons that the desired outcome has not
18 occurred;

19 (ii) The number of months the student has not achieved the
20 desired outcome; and

21 (iii) The efforts made to ensure the student achieves the desired
22 outcome.

23 (4) To the extent that the data elements in subsection (3) of
24 this section are available to the education data center through data-
25 sharing agreements, the office of the superintendent of public
26 instruction must prepare an annual report using existing resources
27 and submit the report to the legislature.

28 (5) To minimize gaps in services through the transition process,
29 no later than three years before students receiving special education
30 services leave the school system, the office of the superintendent of
31 public instruction shall transmit a list of potentially eligible
32 students to the department of social and health services, the
33 counties, the department of services for the blind, and any other
34 state agency working with individuals with intellectual and
35 developmental disabilities. The office of the superintendent of
36 public instruction shall ensure that consent be obtained prior to the
37 release of this information as required in accordance with state and
38 federal requirements.

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