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**SENATE BILL 5969**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Cortes, Hasegawa, Nobles, Shewmake, and C. Wilson

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1 AN ACT Relating to fulfilling high school and beyond plan  
2 requirements with individualized education program transition plans;  
3 and amending RCW 28A.230.212 and 28A.155.220.

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

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

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

11 (b) Students with a required transition plan under RCW  
12 28A.155.220(2) may elect for their transition plan to fulfill the  
13 requirements of this section.

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

1 (b) For each student who has not earned a score of level 3 or 4  
2 on the middle school mathematics assessment identified in RCW  
3 28A.655.070 by grade nine, the high school and beyond plan must be  
4 updated to ensure that the student takes a mathematics course in both  
5 grades nine and 10. These courses may include career and technical  
6 education equivalencies in mathematics adopted pursuant to RCW  
7 28A.230.097.

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

11 (a) The high school and beyond plan must be updated in grade 10  
12 to reflect high school assessment results (~~(in RCW 28A.655.061)~~)  
13 under RCW 28A.655.070(3), ensure student access to advanced course  
14 options per the district's academic acceleration policy in RCW  
15 28A.320.195, assess progress toward identified goals, and (~~(revised)~~)  
16 revise as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs.

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

27 (c) For students with an individualized education program, the  
28 high school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in  
29 alignment with their school to postschool transition plan. The high  
30 school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in a similar  
31 manner and with similar school personnel as for all other students.

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

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

1 students and parents or legal guardians with limited English  
2 proficiency.

3 (b) School districts must annually provide students in grades  
4 eight through 12, and their parents or legal guardians, with  
5 comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options  
6 offered by the district and are strongly encouraged to begin  
7 providing this information to students in grade six. School districts  
8 must provide this information in a manner that conforms with the  
9 school district's language access policy and procedures as required  
10 under chapter 28A.183 RCW.

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

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

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

21 (b) Identification of secondary and postsecondary education and  
22 training goals;

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

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

26 (ii) Satisfies state and local graduation requirements;

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

29 (iv) Identifies available advanced course sequences per the  
30 school district's academic acceleration policy, as described in RCW  
31 28A.320.195, that include dual credit courses or other programs and  
32 are aligned with the student's postsecondary goals;

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

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

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

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

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

8 (i) The college bound scholarship program established in chapter  
9 28B.118 RCW, the Washington college grant created in RCW 28B.92.200,  
10 and other scholarship opportunities;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

38 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.155.220 and 2025 c 256 s 6 are each amended to  
39 read as follows:

1           (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must  
2 establish interagency agreements with the department of social and  
3 health services, the department of services for the blind, and any  
4 other state agency that provides high school transition services for  
5 special education students. Such interagency agreements shall not  
6 interfere with existing individualized education programs, nor  
7 override any individualized education program team's decision-making  
8 power. The purpose of the interagency agreements is to foster  
9 effective collaboration among the multiple agencies providing  
10 transition services for individualized education program-eligible  
11 special education students from the beginning of transition planning,  
12 as soon as educationally and developmentally appropriate, through the  
13 end of the school year in which the student turns 22 years of age, or  
14 through high school graduation, whichever occurs first. Interagency  
15 agreements are also intended to streamline services and programs,  
16 promote efficiencies, and establish a uniform focus on improved  
17 outcomes related to self-sufficiency.

18           (2)(a) When educationally and developmentally appropriate, the  
19 interagency responsibilities and linkages with transition services  
20 under subsection (1) of this section must be addressed in a  
21 transition plan to a postsecondary setting in the individualized  
22 education program of a student with disabilities.

23           (b) Transition planning shall be based upon educationally and  
24 developmentally appropriate transition assessments that outline the  
25 student's individual needs, strengths, preferences, and interests.  
26 Transition assessments may include observations, interviews,  
27 inventories, situational assessments, formal and informal  
28 assessments, as well as academic assessments.

29           (c) The transition services that the transition plan must address  
30 include activities needed to assist the student in reaching  
31 postsecondary goals and courses of study to support postsecondary  
32 goals.

33           (d) Transition activities that the transition plan may address  
34 include instruction, related services, community experience,  
35 employment and other adult living objectives, daily living skills,  
36 and functional vocational evaluation.

37           (e) When educationally and developmentally appropriate, a  
38 discussion must take place with the student and parents, and others  
39 as needed, to determine the postsecondary goals or postschool vision  
40 for the student. This discussion may be included as part of an annual

1 individualized education program review, high school and beyond plan  
2 meeting, or any other meeting that includes parents, students, and  
3 educators. The postsecondary goals included in the transition plan  
4 shall be goals that are measurable and must be based on appropriate  
5 transition assessments related to training, education, employment,  
6 and independent living skills, when necessary. The goals must also be  
7 based on the student's needs, while considering the strengths,  
8 preferences, and interests of the student.

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

12 (g) (~~(A transition plan required)~~) When a student with a required  
13 transition plan under this subsection (2) elects to have both a  
14 transition plan and a high school and beyond plan under RCW  
15 28A.230.212, the transition plan must be aligned with ((a)) the  
16 student's high school and beyond plan.

17 (3) To the extent that data is available through data-sharing  
18 agreements established by the education data center under RCW  
19 43.41.400, the education data center must monitor the following  
20 outcomes for individualized education program-eligible special  
21 education students after high school graduation:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

38 (i) Information on the reasons that the desired outcome has not  
39 occurred;

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

3 (iii) The efforts made to ensure the student achieves the desired  
4 outcome.

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

10 (5) To minimize gaps in services through the transition process,  
11 no later than three years before students receiving special education  
12 services leave the school system, the office of the superintendent of  
13 public instruction shall transmit a list of potentially eligible  
14 students to the department of social and health services, the  
15 counties, the department of services for the blind, and any other  
16 state agency working with individuals with intellectual and  
17 developmental disabilities. The office of the superintendent of  
18 public instruction shall ensure that consent be obtained prior to the  
19 release of this information as required in accordance with state and  
20 federal requirements.

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