

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5841**

Chapter 122, Laws of 2026

69th Legislature  
2026 Regular Session

POSTSECONDARY FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS—HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND PLAN

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 11, 2026

Passed by the Senate March 9, 2026  
Yeas 47 Nays 0

DENNY HECK

**President of the Senate**

Passed by the House March 6, 2026  
Yeas 92 Nays 4

LAURIE JINKINS

**Speaker of the House of  
Representatives**

Approved March 20, 2026 1:47 PM

CERTIFICATE

I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5841** as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

SARAH BANNISTER

**Secretary**

FILED

March 23, 2026

BOB FERGUSON

**Governor of the State of Washington**

**Secretary of State  
State of Washington**

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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5841**

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AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2026 Regular Session

**State of Washington                      69th Legislature                      2026 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by  
Senators Boehnke, Dozier, and Nobles)

READ FIRST TIME 01/30/26.

1            AN ACT Relating to the completion of postsecondary financial aid  
2 applications; and amending RCW 28A.230.215 and 28A.230.212.

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

4            **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.230.215 and 2023 c 271 s 4 are each amended to  
5 read as follows:

6            (1) The legislature finds that fully realizing the potential of  
7 high school and beyond plans as meaningful tools for articulating and  
8 revising pathways for graduation will require additional school  
9 counselors and family coordinators. The legislature further finds  
10 that the development and implementation of an online electronic  
11 platform for high school and beyond plans will be an appropriate and  
12 supportive action that will assist students, parents and guardians,  
13 educators, school counselors, and other staff who support students'  
14 career and college preparation as the legislature explores options  
15 for funding additional school counselors.

16            (2) Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, each school district  
17 must ensure that an electronic high school and beyond plan platform  
18 is available to all students who are required to have a high school  
19 and beyond plan.

20            (3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall  
21 facilitate the transition to a universal online high school and

1 beyond plan platform that will ensure consistent and equitable access  
2 to the needed information and support to guide students' educational  
3 experience and ensure preparation for their postsecondary plans.

4 (a) By January 1, 2024, the office of the superintendent of  
5 public instruction must develop a preliminary list of existing  
6 vendors who can provide or build a platform that meets the criteria  
7 outlined in subsection (4) of this section and that supports the high  
8 school and beyond plan elements identified in RCW 28A.230.212 and has  
9 the capabilities to support the new elements identified in section 5,  
10 chapter 271, Laws of 2023. The office of the superintendent of public  
11 instruction must submit the list of existing vendors and estimated  
12 costs associated with statewide implementation of the universal  
13 platform to the governor and the education policy and fiscal  
14 committees of the legislature.

15 (b) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
16 specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public  
17 instruction must select the vendor that will be responsible for  
18 developing the universal platform by June 1, 2024.

19 (c) By October 1, 2024, the office of the superintendent of  
20 public instruction must develop an implementation plan including both  
21 an estimated timeline and updated cost estimates, including the  
22 technical assistance, technology updates, ongoing maintenance  
23 requirements, and adjustments to the technology funding formula, and  
24 statewide professional development that may be needed, for completing  
25 full statewide implementation of the universal platform in all school  
26 districts. In the implementation plan, the office of the  
27 superintendent of public instruction may include a cost alternative  
28 for educational service districts to host the universal platform for  
29 school districts of the second class when such a district does not  
30 have sufficient technology resources to implement and maintain the  
31 universal platform.

32 (4) (a) In addition to the requirements outlined in RCW  
33 28A.230.212, the universal platform must have the capability to be  
34 routinely updated and modified in order to include the following  
35 elements and capabilities to ensure equity in high school and beyond  
36 plans implementation and engagement across the state that:

37 (i) Enable students to create, personalize, and revise their high  
38 school and beyond plan;

39 (ii) Comply with all necessary state and federal requirements for  
40 student privacy and allow for students to opt in or opt out of

1 portions of the universal platform related to third-party information  
2 sharing;

3 (iii) Use technology that can quickly be adapted to include  
4 future statutory changes, administrative changes, or both, as well as  
5 integrate enhancements to improve the features and functionality;

6 (iv) Facilitate the automatic import of academic course, credit,  
7 and grade data at a regular interval from the most commonly used  
8 district student information system platforms and manual import from  
9 less commonly used systems so that students' progress towards  
10 graduation in the high school (~~(and)~~) and beyond plan is accurately  
11 reflected at any given time;

12 (v) Allow for translation into the most common non-English  
13 languages across the state in accordance with the model language  
14 access policy and procedures as required under chapter 28A.183 RCW;

15 (vi) Include multiple and varied in-platform assessments with  
16 viewable results that can inform career and postsecondary goals  
17 including, but not limited to, personality, learning styles,  
18 interests, aptitudes, and skills assessments;

19 (vii) Include a catalog containing meaningful, high quality  
20 career exploration opportunities and resources beyond the traditional  
21 college, career, and aptitude assessments that are submitted by  
22 approved entities (community organizations, institutions of higher  
23 education that are authorized to participate in state financial aid  
24 programs under chapter 28B.92 RCW, and employers) and vetted by  
25 state-selected approvers that allow students to register for or apply  
26 to participate in the opportunities (programs, classes, internships,  
27 preapprenticeships, online courses, etc.) or access the resources.  
28 The universal platform should use completion data from these  
29 opportunities to make recommendations to students to include in their  
30 high school (~~(and)~~) and beyond plans;

31 (viii) ((A)) Provide a dedicated space in which to build a direct  
32 connection to potential employers, including industry associations,  
33 trade associations, labor unions, service branches of the military,  
34 nonprofit organizations, and other state and local community  
35 organizations so students can learn from experts in different  
36 occupational fields about career opportunities and any necessary  
37 education and training requirements;

38 (ix) ((A)) Provide a secure space for staff, parents or  
39 guardians, and approved community partners who support students'  
40 academic progress and career and college preparation, to make notes

1 that can inform staff efforts to connect students to academic and  
2 career connected learning opportunities and develop support and  
3 credit recovery plans for students, as needed;

4 (x) (~~(Accessibility)~~) Allow for accessibility options for  
5 students needing accommodations including, but not limited to, visual  
6 aids and voice dictation for students with limited literacy skills;

7 (xi) (~~(Indefinite)~~) Provide indefinite access for students to  
8 their high school (~~(+and+)~~) and beyond plan, regardless of current  
9 school affiliation or lack thereof, in both mobile and desktop  
10 applications, that includes the capability to download and print  
11 their plan in one document, without requiring students to access  
12 multiple screens;

13 (xii) (~~(Inclusion of)~~) Use in-state labor market, apprenticeship,  
14 and postsecondary education performance data, including employment  
15 and earning outcomes, certificate and degree completion outcomes, and  
16 demographics of enrolled students or employees, to inform students'  
17 exploration and consideration of postsecondary options;

18 (xiii) (~~(A)~~) Has a dedicated space where students can store  
19 additional evidence of their learning and postsecondary preparation,  
20 such as videos, essays, art, awards and recognitions, screencasts,  
21 letters of recommendation, industry certifications, microcredentials  
22 or other mastery-based learning recognitions, and work-integrated  
23 learning experiences. The universal platform should include the  
24 ability for students and staff to provide access to this portfolio in  
25 its entirety or in selected parts to relevant third parties,  
26 including institutions of higher education that are authorized to  
27 participate in state financial aid programs under chapter 28B.92 RCW,  
28 branches of the military, potential employers, or preapprenticeship  
29 opportunities;

30 (xiv) (~~(Access)~~) Allow access to data reporting features that  
31 allow schools, districts, and state agencies to review data stored  
32 within the universal platform, and allow data to be broken down by  
33 demographic, socioeconomic, and other identified characteristics, for  
34 the purposes of analyzing student use of the universal platform,  
35 improving student access to the information, guidance, and  
36 opportunities that can help them maximize their secondary education  
37 experience and postsecondary preparation, and informing state-level  
38 support for high school and beyond plan implementation;

39 (xv) (~~(A)~~) Provide a space for the student to indicate the  
40 graduation pathway option or options the student has selected to

1 complete and how the selected option or options align with the  
2 student's career and postsecondary education goals; ~~((and))~~

3 (xvi) ~~((The))~~ Has the ability for school districts to customize  
4 or add features unique to local needs and local graduation  
5 requirements, including the capability to auto-align data with the  
6 local school districts' graduation requirements or the ability to  
7 enter those requirements manually;

8 (xvii) Import financial aid application data maintained by the  
9 Washington student achievement council to provide an easily  
10 accessible way for students, parents or guardians, and authorized  
11 school staff to view the student's progress and completion status of  
12 state and federal financial aid applications; and

13 (xviii) Provide electronic notifications, at least annually, to  
14 students enrolled in the college bound scholarship program  
15 established in chapter 28B.118 RCW that remind them of their  
16 enrollment in the program and associated eligibility and other  
17 program requirements, and to complete postsecondary financial aid  
18 applications required for obtaining financial aid for which the  
19 student may be eligible. If possible, notifications provided under  
20 this subsection (4) (a) (xviii) should also be provided to the  
21 student's parents or guardians.

22 (b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must  
23 also ensure that the universal platform will permit transition plans  
24 required by RCW 28A.155.220 to be incorporated into the universal  
25 platform in a manner that eliminates the need to create duplicate or  
26 substantially similar transition plans in other electronic or  
27 nonelectronic formats.

28 (5) (a) Within two years of completing the universal platform  
29 development and alignment with the requirements in this section and  
30 RCW 28A.230.212, school districts must provide students with access  
31 to the adopted universal platform.

32 (b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must  
33 develop guidance and provide technical assistance and support for the  
34 facilitation of statewide professional development for school  
35 districts and partner organizations in using the universal platform.

36 (6) In carrying out subsections (3) (b) and (4) of this section,  
37 the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall seek  
38 input from the state board of education, educators, school and  
39 district administrators, school counselors, career counseling  
40 specialists, families, students, the Washington student achievement

1 council, institutions of higher education that are authorized to  
2 participate in state financial aid programs under chapter 28B.92 RCW,  
3 and community partners who support students' career and college  
4 preparation. The office of the superintendent of public instruction  
5 may partner with existing community and regional networks and  
6 organizations who support students' career and college preparation in  
7 the analysis, selection, and implementation of the universal  
8 platform.

9 (7) As used in this section "universal platform" means the  
10 universal online high school and beyond plan platform.

11 (8) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may  
12 adopt and revise rules as necessary to implement this section.

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

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

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

26 (b) For each student who has not earned a score of level 3 or 4  
27 on the middle school mathematics assessment identified in RCW  
28 28A.655.070 by grade nine, the high school and beyond plan must be  
29 updated to ensure that the student takes a mathematics course in both  
30 grades nine and 10. These courses may include career and technical  
31 education equivalencies in mathematics adopted pursuant to RCW  
32 28A.230.097.

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

36 (a) The high school and beyond plan must be updated in grade 10  
37 to reflect high school assessment results in RCW 28A.655.061, ensure  
38 student access to advanced course options per the district's academic  
39 acceleration policy in RCW 28A.320.195, assess progress toward

1 identified goals, and revised as necessary for changing interests,  
2 goals, and needs.

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

13 (c) For students with an individualized education program, the  
14 high school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in  
15 alignment with their school to postschool transition plan. The high  
16 school and beyond plan must be developed and updated in a similar  
17 manner and with similar school personnel as for all other students.

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

21 (a) High school and beyond plans must be provided to students and  
22 their parents or legal guardians in a language the students and  
23 parents or legal guardians understand and in accordance with the  
24 school district's language access policy and procedures as required  
25 under chapter 28A.183 RCW, which may require language assistance for  
26 students and parents or legal guardians with limited English  
27 proficiency.

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

36 (5) School districts are strongly encouraged to partner with  
37 student serving, community-based organizations that support career  
38 and college exploration and preparation for postsecondary and career  
39 pathways. Partnerships may include high school and beyond plan

1 coordination and planning, data-sharing agreements, and safe and  
2 secure access to individual student's high school and beyond plans.

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

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

7 (b) Identification of secondary and postsecondary education and  
8 training goals;

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

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

12 (ii) Satisfies state and local graduation requirements;

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

15 (iv) Identifies available advanced course sequences per the  
16 school district's academic acceleration policy, as described in RCW  
17 28A.320.195, that include dual credit courses or other programs and  
18 are aligned with the student's postsecondary goals;

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

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

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

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

31 (d) (~~Evidence~~) A postsecondary financial aid application  
32 element that includes:

33 (i) Identification of whether the student is enrolled in the  
34 college bound scholarship program established in chapter 28B.118 RCW;

35 (ii) Evidence that the student has received information about  
36 completing postsecondary financial aid applications that are required  
37 for obtaining financial aid for which the student may be eligible;

38 (iii) Identification of whether the student has completed state  
39 or federal financial aid applications; and



1 remain at the local level, and a school district may establish  
2 additional, local requirements for a high school and beyond plan to  
3 serve the needs and interests of its students and the purposes of  
4 this section.

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

Passed by the Senate March 9, 2026.

Passed by the House March 6, 2026.

Approved by the Governor March 20, 2026.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 23, 2026.

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