

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6260

Chapter 267, Laws of 2026

69th Legislature
2026 Regular Session

PUBLIC EDUCATION—FUNDING

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 11, 2026—Except for sections 5 and 6, which are contingent.

Passed by the Senate March 12, 2026
Yeas 26 Nays 23

DENNY HECK

President of the Senate

Passed by the House March 11, 2026
Yeas 50 Nays 47

LURIE JINKINS

**Speaker of the House of
Representatives**

Approved April 1, 2026 9:59 AM

BOB FERGUSON

Governor of the State of Washington

CERTIFICATE

I, Sarah Bannister, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6260** as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

SARAH BANNISTER

Secretary

FILED

April 1, 2026

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6260

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2026 Regular Session

State of Washington 69th Legislature 2026 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman and C. Wilson; by request of Office of Financial Management)

READ FIRST TIME 03/02/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to efficiencies and programming changes in public
2 education; amending RCW 28A.160.200, 28A.300.072, 28A.405.415,
3 28A.600.402, and 28A.600.402; reenacting and amending RCW
4 28A.500.015; and providing contingent effective dates.

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

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.160.200 and 1995 1st sp.s. c 10 s 2 are each
7 amended to read as follows:

8 (1) The superintendent shall develop a reimbursement schedule to
9 pay districts for the cost of student transportation vehicles
10 purchased after September 1, 1982. While it is the responsibility of
11 each district to select and pay for each student transportation
12 vehicle purchased by the district, each district shall be paid a sum
13 based on the category of vehicle, anticipated lifetime of vehicles of
14 this category, and state reimbursement rate for the category plus
15 inflation as recognized by the reimbursement schedule established in
16 this section as set by the superintendent. Categories and
17 reimbursement rates of vehicles shall be those established under RCW
18 28A.160.195. The accumulated value of the payments and the potential
19 investment return thereon shall be designed to be equal to the
20 replacement cost of the vehicle less its salvage value at the end of
21 its anticipated lifetime. Beginning with buses that are scheduled for

1 depreciation payments as of September 2025 and those qualifying for
2 payments after that date, the superintendent shall use a minimum
3 anticipated lifetime of 120 months for category A buses and 180
4 months for category C and D buses. The superintendent shall revise at
5 least annually the reimbursement payments based on the current and
6 anticipated future cost of comparable categories of transportation
7 equipment. Reimbursements to school districts for approved
8 transportation equipment shall be placed in a separate transportation
9 vehicle fund established for each school district under RCW
10 28A.160.130. However, educational service districts providing student
11 transportation services pursuant to RCW 28A.310.180(4) and receiving
12 moneys generated pursuant to this section shall establish and
13 maintain a separate transportation vehicle account in the educational
14 service district's general expense fund for the purposes and subject
15 to the conditions under RCW 28A.160.130 and 28A.320.300.

16 (2) To the extent possible, districts shall operate vehicles
17 acquired under this section not less than the number of years or
18 useful lifetime now, or hereafter, assigned to the category of
19 vehicles by the superintendent. School districts shall properly
20 maintain the transportation equipment acquired under the provisions
21 of this section, in accordance with rules established by the office
22 of the superintendent of public instruction. If a district fails to
23 follow generally accepted standards of maintenance and operation, the
24 superintendent of public instruction shall penalize the district by
25 deducting from future reimbursements under this section an amount
26 equal to the original cost of the vehicle multiplied by the fraction
27 of the useful lifetime or miles the vehicle failed to operate.

28 (3) The superintendent shall annually develop a depreciation
29 schedule to recognize the cost of depreciation to districts
30 contracting with private carriers for student transportation.
31 Payments on this schedule shall be a straight line depreciation based
32 on the original cost of the appropriate category of vehicle.

33 (4) For a zero-emission school bus, the superintendent shall
34 adjust the district's reimbursement payments generated by that
35 purchase by reducing the quote for that category of vehicle to 33
36 percent of the quote in the 2025-26 through 2027-28 school years.
37 Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the final
38 depreciation payment from being based on the lowest bid in the
39 appropriate bus category for zero emission buses for that school
40 year.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.300.072 and 2025 c 342 s 1 are each amended to
2 read as follows:

3 (1) The intent of the legislature is to continue and rename
4 transitional kindergarten as the transition to kindergarten program
5 and that the program be established in statute with the goal of
6 assisting eligible children in need of additional preparation to be
7 successful kindergarten students in the following school year. The
8 transition to kindergarten program is not part of the state's
9 statutory program of basic education under RCW 28A.150.200.

10 (2) (a) (i) The office of the superintendent of public instruction
11 shall administer the transition to kindergarten program and shall
12 adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW for the administration of, the
13 allocation of state funding for, and minimum standards and
14 requirements for the transition to kindergarten program in accordance
15 with this section.

16 (ii) When developing rules related to the allocation of state
17 funding, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
18 establish criteria for prioritizing:

19 (A) Schools located within extreme child care access deserts as
20 determined by the department of children, youth, and families, except
21 that the office of the superintendent of public instruction must
22 prioritize funding for existing programs that serve students under
23 subsection (2) (a) (ii) (B) of this section before providing funding for
24 new programs located within extreme child care access deserts; and

25 (B) Students who:

26 (I) Qualify for free or reduced-price meals or have a household
27 income at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level and lack
28 access to licensed child care;

29 (II) Are eligible but not scheduled for enrollment in the early
30 childhood education and assistance program or head start program;

31 (III) Are eligible for or receiving special education in
32 accordance with the federal individuals with disabilities education
33 act and chapter 28A.155 RCW; or

34 (IV) Are English learners or multilingual learners.

35 (b) School districts, charter schools (~~(as allowed by subsection~~
36 ~~(7) of this section)), and state-tribal education compact schools
37 operating a transition to kindergarten program shall adopt policies
38 regarding eligibility, recruitment, and enrollment for this program
39 that, at a minimum, meet the requirements of subsection (3) of this
40 section.~~

1 (3) The rules adopted under subsection (2) of this section must
2 include, at a minimum, the following requirements for school
3 districts, charter schools (~~as allowed by subsection (7) of this~~
4 ~~section~~), and state-tribal education compact schools operating a
5 transition to kindergarten program:

6 (a)(i) A limitation on program enrollment to eligible children.
7 Eligible children include only those who:

8 (A) Have been determined to benefit from additional preparation
9 for kindergarten; and

10 (B) Are at least four years old by August 31st of the school year
11 they enroll in the transition to kindergarten program;

12 (ii) A requirement, as practicable, for school districts, charter
13 schools (~~as allowed by subsection (7) of this section~~), and state-
14 tribal education compact schools to prioritize families with the
15 lowest incomes and children most in need for additional preparation
16 to be successful in kindergarten when enrolling eligible children in
17 a transition to kindergarten program;

18 (iii) Access to the transition to kindergarten program does not
19 constitute an individual entitlement for any particular child.

20 (b) Except for children who have been excused from participation
21 by their parents or legal guardians, a requirement that the
22 Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills as established
23 by RCW 28A.655.080 be administered to all eligible children enrolled
24 in a transition to kindergarten program at the beginning of the
25 child's enrollment in the program and at least one more time during
26 the school year(~~(-)~~);

27 (c) A requirement that all eligible children enrolled in a
28 transition to kindergarten program be assigned a statewide student
29 identifier and that the transition to kindergarten program be
30 considered a separate class or course for the purposes of data
31 reporting requirements in RCW 28A.320.175(~~(-)~~);

32 (d) A requirement that a local child care and early learning
33 needs assessment is conducted before beginning or expanding a
34 transition to kindergarten program that considers the existing
35 availability and affordability of early learning providers, such as
36 the early childhood education and assistance programs, head start
37 programs, and licensed child care centers and family home providers
38 in the region. Data available through the regionalized data dashboard
39 maintained by the department of children, youth, and families or any

1 other appropriate sources may be used to inform the needs assessment
2 required by this subsection ~~((-))~~;

3 (e) (i) A requirement that school districts, charter schools ~~((as~~
4 ~~allowed by subsection (7) of this section))~~, and state-tribal
5 education compact schools adhere to guidelines, as developed by the
6 office of the superintendent of public instruction, related to:

7 (A) Best practices for site readiness of facilities that are used
8 for the program;

9 (B) Developmentally appropriate curricula designed to assist in
10 maintaining high quality programs; and

11 (C) Professional development opportunities ~~((-))~~;

12 (ii) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must
13 develop a process for conducting site visits of any school district,
14 charter school ~~((as allowed by subsection (7) of this section))~~, or
15 state-tribal education compact school operating a transition to
16 kindergarten program and provide feedback on elements listed in this
17 subsection (3) (e) ~~((-))~~;

18 (f) ~~((A prohibition on charging tuition or other fees to state-~~
19 ~~funded eligible children for enrollment in a transition to~~
20 ~~kindergarten program.))~~ Authorization to charge sliding scale fees
21 for enrollment in a transition to kindergarten program, except for
22 students who are eligible for but not yet placed in the early
23 childhood education and assistance program or the head start program,
24 or for children with disabilities entitled to a free appropriate
25 public education in accordance with the federal individuals with
26 disabilities education act and chapter 28A.155 RCW; and

27 (g) A prohibition on establishing a policy of excluding an
28 eligible child due only to the presence of a disability.

29 (4) (a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
30 collaboration with the department of children, youth, and families,
31 shall develop statewide coordinated eligibility, recruitment,
32 enrollment, and selection best practices and provide technical
33 assistance to those implementing a transition to kindergarten program
34 to support connections with local early learning providers.

35 (b) School districts, charter schools ~~((as allowed by subsection~~
36 ~~(7) of this section))~~, and state-tribal education compact schools
37 must consider the best practices developed under this subsection (4)
38 when adopting the policies required under subsection (2) (b) of this
39 section.

1 (5) Nothing in this section prohibits school districts, charter
2 schools (~~as allowed by subsection (7) of this section~~), and state-
3 tribal education compact schools from blending or colocating a
4 transition to kindergarten program with other early learning
5 programs.

6 (6) (a) Funding for the transition to kindergarten program (~~must~~
7 ~~be~~) is limited to the amounts provided in the omnibus appropriations
8 act and must be allocated to school districts, charter schools, and
9 state-tribal education compact schools based on the prioritized
10 criteria developed by the office of the superintendent of public
11 instruction under subsection (2) (a) (ii) of this section.

12 (b) Allocations for the transition to kindergarten program are
13 based on the following formulas:

14 (i) The distribution formula established under RCW 28A.150.260
15 (4) (a), (5), (6), (8), and (10) (a) and (b), calculated using the
16 actual number of annual average full-time equivalent eligible
17 children enrolled in the program (~~. A transition to kindergarten~~
18 ~~child must be counted as a kindergarten student for purposes of the~~
19 ~~funding calculations referenced in this subsection, but must be~~
20 ~~reported separately.~~); and

21 (ii) The distribution formula developed in RCW 28A.160.150
22 through 28A.160.192, calculated using reported ridership for eligible
23 children enrolled in the program.

24 (b) (~~Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, the annual average~~
25 ~~full-time equivalent eligible children enrolled in the program funded~~
26 ~~in (a) of this subsection may not exceed the state-funded annual~~
27 ~~average full-time equivalent specified in the omnibus appropriations~~
28 ~~act. During the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years, the office of the~~
29 ~~superintendent of public instruction must prioritize funding for~~
30 ~~programs funded under (a) of this subsection that operated during the~~
31 ~~2024-25 school year~~) A transition to kindergarten child must be
32 counted as a kindergarten student for purposes of the funding
33 calculations referenced in this subsection and for purposes of
34 calculating special education funding under RCW 28A.150.390 (2) (b),
35 but children enrolled in this program must be reported separately.

36 (c) Funding provided for the transition to kindergarten program
37 is not part of the state's statutory program of basic education under
38 RCW 28A.150.200 and must be expended only for the support of
39 operating a transition to kindergarten program.

1 (7) (~~Charter schools authorized under RCW 28A.710.080(2) are~~
2 ~~immediately permitted to operate a transition to kindergarten program~~
3 ~~under this section. Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, any~~
4 ~~charter school authorized under RCW 28A.710.080 (1) or (2) is~~
5 ~~permitted to operate a transition to kindergarten program under this~~
6 ~~section)) Beginning June 30, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
7 office of the superintendent of public instruction must report to the
8 office of the governor and the appropriate committees of the
9 legislature on the planned transition to kindergarten program slot
10 allotment for the upcoming school year. The report must include the
11 following information for each school district, charter school, and
12 state-tribal education compact school that will receive funding for
13 the program during the upcoming school year:~~

14 (a) The number of program slots funded;

15 (b) The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price
16 meals during the previous school year; and

17 (c) Whether the school district, charter school, or state-tribal
18 education compact school is located within, or includes a zip code
19 defined as, an extreme child care access desert as determined by the
20 department of children, youth, and families.

21 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.500.015 and 2025 c 405 s 1 and 2025 c 404 s 2
22 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

23 (1) Beginning in calendar year 2020 and each calendar year
24 thereafter, the state must provide state local effort assistance
25 funding to supplement school district enrichment levies as provided
26 in this section.

27 (2)(a) For an eligible school district with an actual enrichment
28 levy rate that is less than \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value in the
29 school district, the annual local effort assistance funding is equal
30 to the school district's maximum local effort assistance multiplied
31 by a fraction equal to the school district's actual enrichment levy
32 rate divided by \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value in the school
33 district.

34 (b) For an eligible school district with an actual enrichment
35 levy rate that is equal to or greater than \$1.50 per \$1,000 of
36 assessed value in the school district, the annual local effort
37 assistance funding is equal to the school district's maximum local
38 effort assistance.

1 (c) Beginning in calendar year 2022, for state-tribal education
2 compact schools established under chapter 28A.715 RCW, the annual
3 local effort assistance funding is equal to the actual enrichment
4 levy per student as calculated by the superintendent of public
5 instruction for the previous year for the school district in which
6 the state-tribal education compact school is located, up to a maximum
7 per-student amount of \$1,550 as increased by inflation from the 2019
8 calendar year, multiplied by the student enrollment of the state-
9 tribal education compact school in the prior school year.

10 (3) The state local effort assistance funding provided under this
11 section is not part of the state's program of basic education deemed
12 by the legislature to comply with the requirements of Article IX,
13 section 1 of the state Constitution.

14 (4) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
15 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

16 (a) "Eligible school district" means a school district where the
17 amount generated by a levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value in
18 the school district, divided by the school district's total student
19 enrollment in the prior school year, is less than the state local
20 effort assistance threshold.

21 (b) "Inflation" means the implicit price deflator for the
22 previous calendar year using the official current base, compiled by
23 the bureau of economic analysis, United States department of
24 commerce.

25 (c) "Maximum local effort assistance" means the difference
26 between the following:

27 (i) The school district's actual prior school year enrollment
28 multiplied by the state local effort assistance threshold; and

29 (ii) The amount generated by a levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of
30 assessed value in the school district.

31 (d) "Prior school year" means the most recent school year
32 completed prior to the year in which the state local effort
33 assistance funding is to be distributed.

34 (e) "State local effort assistance threshold" means \$1,550 per
35 student, increased for inflation beginning in calendar year 2020.

36 (f) "Student enrollment" means the average annual full-time
37 equivalent student enrollment, reduced by the alternative learning
38 experience adjustment. Alternative learning experience adjustment
39 equals (f)(i) of this subsection minus (f)(ii) of this subsection if
40 a school district's full-time equivalent student enrollment in

1 alternative learning experience courses exceeds ((33)) 25 percent of
2 average annual full-time equivalent student enrollment.

3 (i) The full-time equivalent students enrolled in an alternative
4 learning experience course.

5 (ii) Average annual full-time equivalent student enrollment
6 multiplied by ((33)) 25 percent.

7 (5) For districts in a high/nonhigh relationship, the enrollments
8 of the nonhigh students attending the high school shall only be
9 counted by the nonhigh school districts for purposes of funding under
10 this section.

11 (6) For school districts participating in an innovation academy
12 cooperative established under RCW 28A.340.080, enrollments of
13 students attending the academy shall be adjusted so that each
14 participant district receives its proportional share of student
15 enrollments for purposes of funding under this section.

16 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.405.415 and 2023 c 379 s 7 are each amended to
17 read as follows:

18 (1) Certificated instructional staff who have attained
19 certification from the national board for professional teaching
20 standards shall receive a bonus each year in which they maintain the
21 certification. The bonus shall be calculated as follows: The annual
22 bonus shall be \$5,000 in the 2007-08 school year. Thereafter, the
23 annual bonus shall increase by inflation(~~(, except that the bonus~~
24 ~~shall not be increased during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years))~~
25 through the 2025-26 school year.

26 (2)(a) Certificated instructional staff who have attained
27 certification from the national board for professional teaching
28 standards shall be eligible for bonuses in addition to that provided
29 by subsection (1) of this section if the individual is in an
30 instructional assignment in a school in which at least 70 percent of
31 the students qualify for the free and reduced-price lunch program.

32 (b) An individual is eligible for bonuses authorized under this
33 subsection (2) if he or she is in an instructional assignment in a
34 school that meets the definition of high poverty school as defined in
35 rule by the office of the superintendent of public instruction in the
36 school year immediately preceding the school's participation in the
37 United States department of agriculture's community eligibility
38 provision.

1 (c) For the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years, individuals are
2 eligible for bonuses under this subsection if they are in an
3 instructional assignment in a school providing meals at no charge to
4 students under RCW 28A.235.135 that met the definition of high
5 poverty school as defined in rule by the office of the superintendent
6 of public instruction during the 2022-23 school year.

7 (3) The amount of the additional bonus under subsection (2) of
8 this section for those meeting the qualifications of subsection (2)
9 of this section is \$5,000.

10 (4) The bonuses provided under this section are in addition to
11 compensation received under a district's salary schedule adopted in
12 accordance with RCW 28A.405.200 and shall not be included in
13 calculations of a district's average salary and associated salary
14 limitations under RCW 28A.400.200.

15 (5) The bonuses provided under this section shall be paid in a
16 lump sum amount.

17 **Sec. 5.** RCW 28A.600.402 and 2023 c 350 s 1 are each amended to
18 read as follows:

19 (1) Students participating in running start programs may be
20 funded up to a combined maximum enrollment of (~~1.4~~) 1.2 full-time
21 equivalents, including school district and institution of higher
22 education enrollment.

23 (2) In calculating the combined full-time equivalents, the office
24 of the superintendent of public instruction:

25 (a) Must adopt rules to fund the participating student's
26 enrollment in running start courses provided by the institution of
27 higher education during the summer academic term, up to a maximum of
28 10 college credits per student per summer academic term; and

29 (b) May average the participating student's September through
30 June enrollment to account for differences in the start and end dates
31 for courses provided by the high school and the institution of higher
32 education.

33 (3) Running start programs as a service delivery model and
34 associated funding levels beyond 1.0 full-time equivalent per student
35 are not part of the state's statutory program of basic education
36 under chapter 28A.150 RCW.

37 (4) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
38 consultation with the state board for community and technical
39 colleges, the participating institutions of higher education, the

1 student achievement council, and the education data center, must
2 annually track, and report to the fiscal committees of the
3 legislature, the combined full-time equivalent experience of students
4 participating in running start programs, including course load
5 analyses and enrollments by high school and participating
6 institutions of higher education.

7 **Sec. 6.** RCW 28A.600.402 and 2023 c 350 s 1 are each amended to
8 read as follows:

9 (1) Students participating in running start programs may be
10 funded up to a combined maximum enrollment of 1.4 full-time
11 equivalents, including school district and institution of higher
12 education enrollment, except in the 2026-27 and 2027-28 school years,
13 in which the combined maximum enrollment is 1.3 full-time
14 equivalents.

15 (2) In calculating the combined full-time equivalents, the office
16 of the superintendent of public instruction:

17 (a) Must adopt rules to fund the participating student's
18 enrollment in running start courses provided by the institution of
19 higher education during the summer academic term, up to a maximum of
20 10 college credits per student per summer academic term; and

21 (b) May average the participating student's September through
22 June enrollment to account for differences in the start and end dates
23 for courses provided by the high school and the institution of higher
24 education.

25 (3) Running start programs as a service delivery model and
26 associated funding levels beyond 1.0 full-time equivalent per student
27 are not part of the state's statutory program of basic education
28 under chapter 28A.150 RCW.

29 (4) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
30 consultation with the state board for community and technical
31 colleges, the participating institutions of higher education, the
32 student achievement council, and the education data center, must
33 annually track, and report to the fiscal committees of the
34 legislature, the combined full-time equivalent experience of students
35 participating in running start programs, including course load
36 analyses and enrollments by high school and participating
37 institutions of higher education.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Section 5 of this act takes effect only if
2 chapter . . . (Senate Bill No. 6346), Laws of 2026 is not enacted by
3 June 30, 2026.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Section 6 of this act takes effect only if
5 chapter . . . (Senate Bill No. 6346), Laws of 2026 is enacted by June
6 30, 2026.

Passed by the Senate March 12, 2026.

Passed by the House March 11, 2026.

Approved by the Governor April 1, 2026.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State April 1, 2026.

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