

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1418

C 20 L 10
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing a statewide dropout reengagement system.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi, Priest, Sullivan, Walsh, Pettigrew, Roberts, Dickerson, Quall, Seaquist, Sells, Appleton, Hunt, Haler, Pedersen, Orwall, Ormsby, Hasegawa, Conway, Kenney, Maxwell, Santos, Probst, Driscoll, Goodman and Nelson).

House Committee on Education
House Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Education Appropriations
Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Students are eligible to receive education in a public school until the age of 21 or completion of a high school diploma, whichever is sooner. School districts have authority to contract with colleges, community-based organizations, or other education providers to provide educational services. School districts that use basic education dollars for these services must meet certain criteria established by rules that are intended to assure that the contracted services meet the purpose of basic education program requirements.

A number of school districts have created programs for older youth who have dropped out of school and are so far behind in accumulating credits that graduation before the age of 21 is unlikely. Some districts offer their own programs through an alternative high school; others contract with community and technical colleges or community-based organizations. In some cases, one school district acts as a contracting and fiscal agent on behalf of multiple districts in the region, and students from other districts enroll in the non-resident.

In recent years a number of school districts have terminated their contracted dropout reengagement programs. Reasons cited include lack of clarity in state laws and rules governing these contracts. At least one school district has been the subject of audit findings for noncompliance with rules governing expenditure of basic education dollars. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has made several special adaptations to the rules, including on an emergency basis, in an attempt to provide clarity. School districts that

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have enrolled nonresident students express concerns about assuming liability for these students, especially if the students are eligible for special education. There are no standardized contracts or agreements.

One of the recommendations from the Building Bridges Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Retrieval Workgroup in its 2008 report to the Legislature was to establish a statewide dropout retrieval system with a single, comprehensive regulatory framework to govern retrieval programs.

Summary:

A statutory framework for a statewide dropout re-engagement system is created to provide education and services to older youth who have dropped out of school or are not expected to graduate from high school by the age of 21. Under the system, school districts are authorized but not required to enter into model inter-local agreements with an Educational Service District (ESD), community or technical college, or other public entity to provide a dropout re-engagement program for eligible students, or enter into a model contract with a community-based organization. Current authority of school districts to contract for program services is not affected.

If a school district does not contract to provide a dropout re-engagement program for its resident students, an ESD, community or technical college, other public entity, or community-based organization may petition another school district to enroll those students and contract with the petitioning entity to provide a program.

For the purposes of the system, dropout re-engagement programs offer at least the following:

- academic instruction, including GED preparation, academic skills, and college and work readiness preparation, that generates high school credit for a diploma and has the goal of academic and work readiness;
- instruction by certified teachers or college instructors whose credentials are established by the college;
- case management, counseling, and resource and referral services; and
- opportunity for qualified students to enroll in college courses tuition-free if the program provider is a college.

Students eligible for dropout re-engagement programs are those aged 16 to 21 who are so credit deficient that completion of a high school diploma before age 21 is not reasonable, or are recommended by social service or juvenile justice system case managers. Students may enroll in their resident school district or another district. The OSPI must adopt criteria defining a full-time equivalent (FTE) student for purposes of dropout re-engagement programs based on college credits or planned programming and minimum attendance, but not based on seat-time.

The OSPI must develop model inter-local agreements and contracts for the dropout re-engagement system, which must at a minimum address the following topics:

- responsibilities for identification, referral, and enrollment of eligible students;
- instruction and services to be provided by a dropout re-engagement program;

- responsibilities for data collection and reporting, including transcripts and the student information system;
- administration of state assessments;
- uniform financial reimbursement rates per-FTE student, using statewide average basic education allocations and allowing for a uniform district administrative fee;
- responsibilities for providing special education and accommodations;
- minimum instructional staffing ratios for community-based programs, which are not required to be the same as for basic education; and
- performance measures reported to the state, including longitudinal monitoring of student progress and postsecondary education and employment.

Students in a dropout re-engagement program are considered regular students of the district in which they are enrolled, but they do not count against a district's basic education staffing ratio compliance.

The OSPI must adopt rules to implement these provisions and must consult with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Board, dropout re-engagement programs, school districts, approved providers of online learning, and ESDs.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	82	13
House	96	2
Senate	46	0

Effective: June 10, 2010