

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1418

As of February 19, 2010

Title: An act relating to establishing a statewide dropout reengagement program.

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).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/15/10, 96-2.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/18/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

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 broad 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.

In the Building Bridges Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Retrieval Workgroup's 2008 report to the Legislature, one of the recommendations was to establish a statewide dropout retrieval system with a single, comprehensive regulatory framework to govern retrieval programs.

Summary of Bill: A statutory framework for a statewide dropout reengagement 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 interlocal agreements with an Educational Service District (ESD), community or technical college, or other public entity to provide a dropout reengagement 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.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

If a school district does not contract to provide a dropout reengagement program for its resident students, an ESD, community or technical college, other public entity, or community-based organization can petition another school district to enroll those students and enter an interlocal agreement or contract to provide a program.

For the purposes of the system, dropout reengagement 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 reengagement 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 can enroll in their resident school district or another district. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must adopt criteria defining a full-time equivalent (FTE) student for purposes of dropout reengagement programs based on college credits or planned programming and minimum attendance, but not based on seat time.

OSPI must develop model interlocal agreements and contract for the dropout reengagement 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;
- responsibilities for data collection and reporting;
- 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 reengagement 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.

OSPI must adopt rules to implement the provisions and must consult with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, dropout reengagement programs, school districts, approved providers of online learning, and ESDs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 16, 2010.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The critical change in this year's version is school districts "may" instead of "must" operate programs for students who are interested in completing education and going on. The bill provides a statutory framework and directs OSPI to develop model contracts so that districts can continue to operate alternative programs. OSPI is in full support of the bill. The lack of a statutory framework for these programs creates barriers, and programs have been lost across the state because there is no clear guidance on the rules. The current funding system is precarious. The bill provides clarity and stability for programs in community and technical colleges. Anything we can do for the most vulnerable students is what we need to do. We are going to unnecessarily push students to drop out or into special education if we don't have more supports. Building Bridges reinforced its recommendation to provide a system for students not likely to return to school. It costs the state a lot to have students drop out of school. An alternative pathway allows children to thrive and succeed. The profile of a typical student served in Career Education Options (CEO) at Shoreline Community College is a 17½-year old with freshman-year credits. They succeed in CEO, passing the GED and getting a higher hourly wage. Students need options other than traditional high schools which feels like a waste of time, doesn't allow for teacher support, and is not a realistic option for a student ready to return after pregnancy, juvenile detention, or treatment. Learning Center North is motivating because it is directly applied to what I want to do. CEO made turning my life around a real possibility. We need more programs like this.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kagi, prime sponsor; Michael Tate, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Board; Mariko Kakiuchi, Michelle Pinner, Grand Baldwin-Madison, Genessee Rickel, Shoreline Community College; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition.