

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6323

---

---

As of January 25, 2012

**Title:** An act relating to reducing certain requirements affecting school districts.

**Brief Description:** Reducing certain requirements affecting school districts.

**Sponsors:** Senators Hobbs, Litzow, McAuliffe, Rolfes, Tom and Frockt; by request of Governor Gregoire.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/25/12.

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Stephanie Christensen (786-7405)

**Background:** Culminating Project. The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes some of the state's graduation requirements. SBE established the Culminating Project as a graduation requirement in 2000, effective for students in the graduating class of 2008. The Culminating Project is an experiential, hands-on project that gives students a formal opportunity to demonstrate in a variety of ways their learning competencies related to Washington's Basic Education learning goals three and four.

Learning Assistance Program (LAP). LAP is Washington's state-funded program that provides additional academic support to eligible students. Eligible students are those achieving below grade level on the state's assessment, and students in grades 11 and 12 at risk of not graduating.

LAP funds are available to support programs in grades K-12 in reading, writing, mathematics, and readiness for those subjects. Accelerated Student Learning Plans are required for LAP-served students. A participating school district must submit the district's plan for using learning assistance funds to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for approval.

School District Audits. The examination of the financial affairs of all local governments shall be made at such reasonable, periodic intervals as the state auditor determines, but must be made at least once every three years.

---

*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.*

**Summary of Bill:** Culminating Project. A student is not required to complete the state board's high school graduation requirement for a culminating project if the student has completed at least one of the following:

- a running start program and is leaving high school with an associate degree;
- a high school navigation 101, advancement via individual determination, or similar program focused on career planning and skill development in preparation for a targeted career;
- a career and technical education program resulting in a skill certificate;
- a year of college-level coursework;
- an international baccalaureate certificate program; or
- at least four courses in or among the following programs: AP, engineering or biological sciences; international baccalaureate, or Cambridge with college credit equivalency exams.

Learning Assistance Program. A participating school district's plan for using learning assistance funds must identify the program strategies and activities to be implemented and other practices used to accelerate student learning. Among other requirements, the school district learning plan must include processes used for: setting student achievement goals, communication with and involvement of parents and guardians, district plan review, evaluation and adjustments, identifying and using assessments, supporting and developing skills of program instructional staff, coordinating other federal, state, district, and school resources, and coordinating the program with school improvement plans and the district's strategic plan.

School District Audits. Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, the state auditor shall conduct fiscal and performance audits no more than once every three years for school districts when no findings of impropriety were found for the school districts for the previous three years. The state auditor is not prohibited from conducting audits: (1) to address suspected fraud or irregular conduct; (2) at the request of the local school board of directors; or (3) as required by federal law or regulations.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 19, 2012.

**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: Great opportunity to save school districts time and money. Removing requirement for individual learning plans will allow for continual instruction-based plans throughout the year. Doesn't eliminate culminating project, but gives options for students who are doing other things. This allows audits to be conducted less frequently, but contains safeguards to ensure audits are being conducted when necessary.

OTHER: We've created enough exemptions that there may not be a Culminating Project graduation requirement in the future. Alternatives to the Culminating Project should be simplified to reduce burden on proctors of Culminating Project.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn.; Judy Hartmann, Governor's Policy Office; Marie Sullivan, WA State School Directors' Assn.

OTHER: Aaron Wyatt, SBE; Tim Knue, WA Assn. for Career & Technical Education; Jerry Bender, Assn. of WA School Principals.