
Education Committee

E2SSB 5330

Brief Description: Improving student achievement and student outcomes.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Shin and Hill).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Allows school districts to use up to three days at the beginning of the school year to meet with families and students as part of a kindergarten readiness assessment.
- Directs that funding for parent involvement coordinators be included in the operating budget, and requires school districts to use the funds for this purpose.
- Establishes a mentor program for new and probationary teachers, if funds are appropriated.
- Expands the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) to serve students with behavior not conducive to learning.
- Requires the LAP to use programs on a best practices inventory developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy or approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).
- Provides that school districts with more than 15 percent language diversity receive funding for professional development on English language instruction, if funds are appropriated.
- Requires that funding for the Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program be scaled according to student need and that additional funding be provided for exited students.
- Requires the OSPI to create interagency agreements on transition services for students with disabilities and requires reporting on post high school outcomes.

Hearing Date: 3/21/13

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

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.

Background:

Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS).

Legislation enacted in 2011 requires that, if funding is provided, all schools offering state-funded all-day kindergarten must administer a kindergarten readiness assessment, the WaKIDS, at the beginning of the school year. One of the components of the WaKIDS is Family Connections, which involves a meeting between the teacher and the child's family to share information about the child's interests, needs, and family culture, as well as the classroom and school the child is attending.

One of the statutory Basic Education requirements is that school districts must offer 180 school days of instruction per year. The State Board of Education (SBE) is authorized to grant waivers of Basic Education provisions under certain circumstances. Sixteen school districts in 2012 applied for and received waivers to use between one and five school days to schedule the Family Connections component of the WAKIDS over the course of a full day. There is a provision in current law that allows school districts to schedule the last five school days of the year for non-instructional purposes for students who are graduating from high school.

Class Size.

Current law provides that the minimum state allocation for kindergarten through third grade (K-3) class size must be sufficient to achieve an average K-3 class size of 25.23. The law also provides that the amount provided must be sufficient to fund no more than 17 students per teacher beginning in the 2017-18 school year. School districts are not required to spend the funds to achieve the statutory class size

Parent Involvement Coordinators.

The prototypical school funding formula lists parent involvement coordinators as one of the staff positions for elementary, middle, and high schools, but does not include a staffing level in the formula. All staffing levels in the current formula are for allocation purposes only. School districts make actual staffing decisions at the local level.

Teacher Mentor Program.

In 2009 the Legislature redesigned the Teacher Assistance Program to create a grant program called the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST). The BEST, which is established only in budget proviso, must include a paid orientation; assignment of a qualified mentor; development of a professional growth plan for each beginning teacher aligned with professional certification; and release time for mentors and new teachers. The 2011-12 grant recipients included two school districts and three regional consortia serving 26 additional school districts. The 2011-13 biennial operating budget provided \$2 million for the BEST.

Learning Assistance Program.

The Learning Assistance Program (LAP) provides instructional support for students who are performing below grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics. The funding allocation is based on the percentage of students in the school district who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch, but for purposes of providing supplemental instruction school districts must identify those students with the greatest academic deficits. The Legislature appropriated \$255 million in state funds for the LAP in the 2011-13 biennium.

School districts must submit an annual plan that identifies the activities to be conducted and the expenditure of funds under the LAP. Districts may conduct outreach and support activities for parents of participating students. The plan is required to have a number of specified elements and must be approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Building Bridges Program.

In 2007 the Legislature created a Building Bridges Program to award grants to local partnerships of schools, families, and communities to develop comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval systems based on community needs and resources. In 2012-13 three grantees each received \$75,000: the Granite Falls School District, Educational Service District 113, and the Vancouver School District.

Readiness to Learn.

Readiness to Learn is a grant program administered by the OSPI to support development of a continuum of care for at-risk children and families by combining school and community resources. The 2011-13 biennial budget contains \$6.4 million for grants to 20 school districts and six Educational Service Districts.

Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program.

The Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP) provides instructional support for students whose level of English language proficiency is determined to be sufficiently deficient to impair learning. The prototypical school funding formula allocates funds to support 4.778 hours per week of supplemental instruction in a class of 15 students for each student eligible for and enrolled in the TBIP. In addition to providing assessment and instruction for enrolled students, school districts are expected to provide in-service training for teachers, counselors, and other staff who are involved in the district's TBIP. The 2011-13 operating budget contains \$160 million in state funds to support the TBIP.

Transition Services for Special Education Students.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students with disabilities age 16 and over must include transition services designed to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated or supported employment, adult services, and independent living, as appropriate. The OSPI has established interagency agreements with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department Services for the Blind (DSB) intending to clarify the role of each agency in coordinating transition services. The OSPI also contracts with the Center for Change in Transition Services at Seattle University to provide technical assistance to school districts and annually track and report on post-high school outcomes for special education students, which is a federal requirement.

Education Data.

The Education Data Center in the Office of Financial Management creates data-sharing agreements with other state agencies to enable research on student outcomes across the spectrum of early learning, K-12 education, postsecondary education, and employment.

Summary of Bill:

The WaKIDS.

Within the 180-day school year required under Basic Education, schools that are administering the WaKIDS are authorized to use up to three school days at the beginning of the year to meet with parents and families as required in the parent involvement component of the inventory.

Class Size.

School districts receive funds to reduce K-3 class size below 25.23 students only to the extent that they document a class size between 25.23 students and the class size funded in the operating budget.

Parent Involvement Coordinators.

The operating budget must specify a level of state funding for parent involvement coordinators, which must be used by school districts to employ such coordinators and to implement research-proven parent involvement programs. Audits conducted by the State Auditor must include findings regarding school district compliance with this requirement.

Teacher Mentor Program.

If funds are appropriated for this purpose, the Educator Support Program (ESP) is established to provide mentor support for novice and probationary teachers. The OSPI must provide funding for the required components of the ESP and an average of two hours of mentor support per week for first-year and probationary teachers, with a caseload not greater than 15 teachers for a full-time mentor. Mentor support and caseload are adjusted for second and third-year teachers. School districts must provide the following ESP components: a paid orientation; assignment of a qualified mentor; development of a professional growth plan for each beginning teacher aligned with professional certification; release time for mentors and new teachers; and teacher observation time with accomplished peers.

Learning Assistance Program.

The LAP is expanded to include strategies to assist students who have behaviors that are not conducive to their own learning or the learning of others, but who are not eligible for special education. These students are to be identified using an age-appropriate, research-based standardized screening recommended by the OSPI. The placement of these students in the LAP may be temporary or for the full school year.

Under the LAP, school districts must implement practices, activities, or programs from an inventory of evidence and research-based effective programs developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. The inventory must be updated every two years. A district may use a program that is not on the inventory only for one year. If the district demonstrates that students experience an increase in achievement, the OSPI must approve use of the program for an additional year. The OSPI must monitor school district fidelity in implementing the programs on the inventory. The LAP funds may also be used to employ parent involvement coordinators.

In addition to submitting LAP plans, school districts must report the following:

- entrance and exit data for LAP students;
- academic growth for each LAP student;
- the number of LAP students who gain at least one year of academic growth; and
- the specific practices and activities used by each school building receiving LAP funds.

Building Bridges Program.

The following receive priority when Building Bridges Program grants are awarded:

- school districts with the highest number of truancy petitions filed;
- school districts receiving Readiness to Learn grants; and
- nonprofit organizations with effective programs to lower the dropout rate, engage students in learning, and improve student achievement.

Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program.

To the extent funds are appropriated for this purpose, school districts with more than 15 percent language diversity must receive funds to provide research-based professional development on best practices for instruction of English Language Learners. The best practices must be ones identified or developed by the OSPI.

Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, funding for the TBIP must be scaled to provide more support to students requiring the most intensive intervention and less support for those requiring less intervention, as specified in the operating budget.

Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, additional funding must be provided in the operating budget for students who exited the TBIP in the previous year. The additional funding must be used to provide academic support for exited students, if needed, or may be used within the TBIP. The funding is not considered part of Basic Education and does not create an individual entitlement for any particular student.

Transition Services for Special Education Students.

The OSPI is directed to establish interagency agreements with the DSHS, the DSB, and any other state agency that provides transition services for students with disabilities. The purpose of the agreements is to foster effective multiagency collaboration in providing transition services for students age 14 and over. This requirement does not mandate additional transition services plan development beyond what exists when the requirement takes effect.

The OSPI must collaborate with the Professional Educator Standards Board to build into educator requirements that special education teachers and school psychologists receive training to address the transition needs of students with disabilities.

Education Data.

To the extent data are available through data-sharing agreements, the EDC must monitor specified post-high school outcomes for students with disabilities, including integrated employment, enrollment in postsecondary education or training leading to integrated employment, wages and hours worked, settings in which students reside, and the reasons for the lack of employment or postsecondary program enrollment. If not available through data-sharing, the OSPI must attempt to collect the data through a single communication with the student. The OSPI must prepare an annual report and submit it to the Legislature.

The OSPI must establish a pilot project with one school district to provide support for the district to use longitudinal data to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes and close achievement gaps. The pilot project expires December 1, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 12, 2013.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.