

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5180

C 231 L 13

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Improving access to higher education for students with disabilities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Shin, Roach, Benton, Conway, Harper, Keiser, Sheldon, McAuliffe, Hill, Hatfield, Frockt, Schlicher and Kline).

Senate Committee on Higher Education
House Committee on Higher Education

Background: Seattle University's Center for Change in Transitions Services (Center for Change) reported that in the 2009-10 school year there were 6760 special education high school students in Washington who either graduated, dropped out, or otherwise left their school between the ages of 16-21. Of these students, 4331 were contacted one year after leaving high school by the Center for Change. The Center for Change found that 25 percent enrolled in higher education, 22 percent were competitively employed, 5 percent were receiving some other form of education, 14 percent had some other form of employment, and 34 percent were not engaged in higher education or employment.

The Student Achievement Council was established on July 1, 2012, and provides strategic planning, oversight, and advocacy to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington. The nine-member Council includes five citizens, one current student, one representative from each of the state's three major higher educational sectors, and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Agency staff support the work of the Council, performing assigned functions and managing the student financial aid programs previously administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Summary: A taskforce on improving access to higher education for students with disabilities is established.

The taskforce must not consist of more than 29 members.

The taskforce must collaborate to carry out multiple goals and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding students' transition from K-12 to higher education. Some of these goals and considerations include but are not limited to the following:

- making the transition from K-12 education to higher education more seamless and successful;

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- selecting a statewide method of sharing best practices between education institutions;
- improving outreach to students and their families regarding available options in higher education; and
- investigating the creation of a statewide database of student disability accommodation equipment, software, and resources owned by school districts and postsecondary education institutions.

The Student Achievement Council provides staff support to the taskforce within existing funds. The taskforce must report its recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2013, and annually thereafter until January 1, 2016.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0
House	76	21

Effective: July 28, 2013.