
Education Committee

SSB 5679

Brief Description: Concerning transition services for special education students.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Litzow, Dammeier, Hasegawa, Liias, Chase, Rolfes, Jayapal, Parlette and Conway).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires that transition services be address in a transition plan in the Individualized Education Program of a student with disabilities by age 16.
- Specifies some requirements for transition planning, transition assessments, and transition services.
- Provides that a student with disabilities who has a High School and Beyond Plan may use it as the required transition plan.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish interagency agreements with the Workforce Board Training and Education Coordinating Board to provide transition services.

Hearing Date: 3/19/15

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

High School and Beyond Plan.

The Legislature authorized the State Board of Education (SBE) to establish the minimum state requirements for high school graduation, within certain parameters established by the Legislature. The SBE's rules require each student to have a High School and Beyond Plan that describes what the student expects to do the year following graduation.

Special Education.

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.

Under federal and state law, school districts must provide an appropriate educational opportunity to children with disabilities, meaning those children who have been determined eligible for special education due to a disability. An appropriate education is specially designed instruction and related services to address the unique needs, abilities, and limitations of a student with a disability.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) guides a student's learning while in a special education program. It describes the amount of time the student will spend receiving special education, any related services the student will receive, and the academic/behavioral goals and expectations for the year. The IEP is developed and revised annually by an IEP team, which includes the student's parent or guardian, one of the student's general education teachers, one special education teacher, a representative of the school district, someone who can interpret assessment results, and others who may have special knowledge or expertise.

Transition Plans and Services.

By the age of 16, students receiving special education services with an IEP must begin to develop a transition plan as part of their IEP. These plans include setting postsecondary goals for employment, education, and independent living skills, where appropriate. The plans also include developing a high school course of study and other activities for skills development to help students reach their goals. These components are also part of high-quality High School and Beyond Plans.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must establish interagency agreements with the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Services for the Blind, and other state agencies that provide high school transition services for special education students. The purpose of these agreements is to foster effective collaboration among the multiple agencies providing these services for IEP-eligible special education students from the beginning of transition planning through age 21, unless the student has graduated from high school. These agreements are intended to streamline services and programs, promote efficiencies, and establish a uniform focus on improved outcomes related to self-sufficiency. However, these provisions do not require transition service plan development in addition to what exists on June 12, 2014.

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

In 1991 the Legislature created the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) as a state agency. The Workforce Board has nine voting members appointed by the Governor: three business representatives, three labor representatives, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and three government representatives. The chair is a nonvoting member, also selected by the Governor. The purpose of the Workforce Board is to provide planning, coordination, evaluation, monitoring, and policy analysis for the state training system as a whole, and advice to the Governor and Legislature concerning the state training system, in cooperation with the state training system and the Washington Student Achievement Council.

Summary of Bill:

Transition services must be addressed in a transition plan in the IEP of a student with disabilities by age 16, or as early as age 14, if age appropriate. To determine the postsecondary goals or postschool vision for the student, a discussion should take place with the student and parents, and

others as needed. The postsecondary goals must be measurable and be based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills, when necessary. The goals must also be based on the student's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests.

Transition assessments may include observations, interviews, inventories, situational assessments, formal and informal assessments, as well as academic assessments.

Transition services must include activities needed to assist the student in reaching postsecondary goals and courses of study to support postsecondary goals. These activities may include instruction, related services, community experience, employment and other adult living objectives, daily living skills, and functional vocational evaluation.

As a student gets older, changes in the transition plan may be noted in the annual update of the student's IEP. A student with disabilities who has a High School and Beyond Plan may use it as the required transition plan.

The OSPI must establish interagency agreements with the Workforce Board to provide high school transition services for special education students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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