

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5679

C 217 L 15
Synopsis as Enacted

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).

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education House Committee on Education

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

Under state special education laws and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), public school districts must provide a free and appropriate education for students with a disability. An appropriate education is specially designed instruction and related services to address the unique needs, abilities, and limitations of the student with a disability.

Under IDEA, 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 and 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. Under IDEA, transition services must be included in the IEP beginning at age 16, or earlier if appropriate. The transition services must be designed to facilitate the student's movement from school to postsecondary activities including education, vocational education, integrated or supported employment, adult services, and independent living, as appropriate.

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.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) collects data on students receiving special education, which must be submitted annually to the U.S. Department of Education. In November 2014 OSPI reported there were 9173 students age 14 and 9240 students age 15 receiving special education in Washington.

Current state law requires OSPI to establish interagency agreements with the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Services for the Blind, and any other state agency that provides high school transition services for special education students in order to foster collaboration among the multiple agencies providing transition services.

Summary: The multiple agencies that provide transition services for special education students must do so as soon as educationally and developmentally appropriate. The transition services must be addressed in a transition plan in the IEP of a student with disabilities. Transition planning must be based on educationally and developmentally appropriate transition assessments that outline the student's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests. Transition services include activities to assist the student reach postsecondary goals and courses of study to support the goals. Transition 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 at the annual update of the student's IEP. A student with disabilities who has a High School and Beyond Plan may use that plan as the required transition plan.

To determine the postsecondary goals of the student, a discussion should take place with the student, the student's parents, and others, as needed. The goals must be measurable and based on transition assessments, when necessary. The goals must also be based on the student's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests.

Votes on Final Passage:

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|--------|----|----|--|
| Senate | 48 | 0 | |
| House | 84 | 13 | (House amended) |
| Senate | | | (Senate refused to concur) |
| House | | | (House insisted on position / asked Senate to concur) |
| Senate | | | (Senate insisted on positions / asked House to recede) |
| House | 91 | 7 | (House receded/amended) |
| Senate | 47 | 0 | (Senate concurred) |

Effective: July 24, 2015