
Education Committee

HB 2748

Brief Description: Modifying the learning assistance program.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Stonier, Muri and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that funds appropriated for the Learning Assistance program (LAP) be expended in a manner consistent with the Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol.
- Eliminates certain LAP provisions, for example, the requirements to focus first on addressing the reading needs of kindergarten through fourth grade students; design the LAP to reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom; and use the state menu of best practice and strategies, or obtain approval to use an alternative practice.

Hearing Date: 1/23/18

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Learning Assistance Program.

Program Design. In order to assist students who are not meeting academic standards and reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom, the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) is designed to: (1) promote the use of data when developing programs; and (2) guide school districts in providing the most effective and efficient practices when implementing supplemental instruction and services. "Students who are not meeting academic standards" means students with the greatest academic deficits in basic skills as identified by statewide, school, or district assessments or other performance measurement tools.

Program Focus. School districts implementing a LAP must focus first on addressing the needs of students in grades kindergarten through four (K-4) who are deficient in reading or reading readiness skills to improve reading literacy.

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.

Menu of Best Practices. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) publishes a state menu of best practices and strategies for reading and literacy improvement, and use in the LAP to assist struggling students in English language arts and mathematics and to reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Districts were required to begin using these best practices practices and strategies in the 2016-17 school year, or comply with certain requirements to obtain approval from the OSPI to use an alternative practice or strategy. School districts may enter cooperative agreements with state agencies, local governments, or school districts for administrative or operational costs needed to provide services in accordance with the state menus.

To the extent included on the state menu or an approved alternative, specified services and activities may be supported by the LAP, for example: Extended learning time opportunities; defined professional development activities; consultants; tutoring; outreach and support for parents; and development of partnerships with community-based organizations, educational service districts, and other local agencies to deliver academic and nonacademic supports, if approved by the school board at an open meeting, with a maximum of 5 percent of the LAP allocation used for this purpose.

Funding. The state provides two types of funding allocations for the LAP. First, based on the percentage of students enrolled in the school district who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals (FRPM) in the prior school year, the state allocates funding to provide, on a statewide average, 2.3975 hours per week in extra instruction in a class size of 15 students. Districts must spend this allocation for the LAP, but they may use the funding to provide LAP services for any qualifying student. Second, under a new high-poverty, school-based LAP allocation, schools with at least 50 percent of students eligible for FRPM generate an additional state allocation to fund, on a statewide average, 1.1 hours per week in extra instruction in a class size of 15 students. Districts may spend this high-poverty allocation only for LAP services in those schools whose FRPM rates generated the funding.

Report. School districts must report the following information to the OSPI, annually: The amount of academic growth gained by students participating in the LAP; the number of students who gain at least one year of academic growth; and the specific practices, activities, and programs used by each school building that received LAP funding. The OSPI compiles the district data and reports annual and longitudinal gains for the specific practices, activities, and programs used by the districts to show which are the most effective.

Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol.

The Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol, or WISSP, has been developed by the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning within the OSPI. The purposes of the program include:

- supporting a school-based approach to promoting the success of all students by coordinating academic and nonacademic supports to reduce barriers to academic achievement and educational attainment;
- fulfilling a vision of public education where educators focus on education, students focus on learning, and auxiliary supports enable teaching and learning to occur unimpeded;

- encouraging the creation, expansion, and quality improvement of community-based supports that can be integrated into the academic environment of schools and school districts;
- increasing public awareness of the evidence showing that academic outcomes are a result of both academic and nonacademic factors; and
- supporting statewide and local organizations in their efforts to provide leadership, coordination, technical assistance, professional development, and advocacy to implement high-quality, evidence-based, student-centered, coordinated approaches throughout the state.

The framework of the WISSP includes needs assessments, integration and coordination, community partnerships, and a requirement that the program be data driven. The framework must facilitate the ability of any academic or nonacademic provider to support the needs of at-risk students, including: out-of-school providers, social workers, mental health counselors, physicians, dentists, speech therapists, and audiologists.

Summary of Bill:

While the state allocations for the LAP are intended to be flexible dollars within the control of the public school and school district, this local control must be balanced with local accountability for improvement in student achievement; thus funds appropriated for the LAP must be expended in a manner consistent with the WISSP.

The following LAP provisions are eliminated:

- the LAP must focus first on addressing the reading needs of K-4 students;
- the LAP is designed to reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom;
- districts must use the state menu of best practice and strategies, or obtain approval to use an alternative practice;
- certain services and activities may be supported by the LAP only if approved by the state as a best practice or strategy, or alternative;
- only 5 percent of a district's LAP allocation may be used for partnership development;
- the panel of experts that must be convened to develop best practices and strategies for the LAP must include the Washington State Institute for Public Policy;
- districts may enter cooperative agreements for administrative or operational costs needed to provide services in accordance with the state menu.

The OSPI's LAP reports must be submitted to the Legislature annually beginning November 1, 2018.

Nonsubstantive and technical changes are made, including using the term "students who are not meeting academic standards," rather than "underachieving students," throughout the school code.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 2018.

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