
HOUSE BILL 1542

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Representatives Doglio, Santos, Hudgins, Riccelli, Peterson, Stonier, Dolan, Kagi, Macri, Tharinger, Sawyer, Gregerson, Senn, Fitzgibbon, and Lovick

Read first time 01/23/17. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to dropout prevention through engaging youth in
2 farming; adding a new section to chapter 28A.630 RCW; creating a new
3 section; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that low-income
6 youth are not only at higher risk of dropping out of school, they are
7 also less likely to have dependable access to sufficient and
8 nutritious food. There is sufficient evidence to find that innovative
9 partnerships between community-based organizations, schools, food
10 banks, and farms or gardens address both dropout prevention and food
11 security for such youth. In these dropout prevention programs, low-
12 income youth can earn credits toward high school graduation and
13 receive youth development support and services, while enhancing
14 health and nutrition in their surrounding communities. The
15 legislature finds that engaging community partners in dropout
16 prevention programs saves taxpayers money because the youth receive
17 academic and career training at the same time as they are being
18 productive members of society. These types of partnerships should be
19 supported as pilot projects and carefully evaluated to assure that
20 desired outcomes are met and to identify opportunities for expansion
21 and replication in other parts of the state.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.630
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) The dropout prevention through farm engagement pilot project
4 is established for a three-year period beginning in the 2017-18
5 school year.

6 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
7 select five pilot projects from school districts that agree to
8 partner with community-based organizations, food banks, and farms or
9 gardens to establish an alternative high school program targeted
10 primarily to at-risk youth as provided in subsection (3) of this
11 section. One of the selected projects must be a currently operating
12 program with a record of success in engaging low-income and
13 disengaged youth. One of the selected projects must be located east
14 of the crest of the Cascade mountains and at least one must be
15 located south of highway 12 and west of the crest of the Cascade
16 mountains.

17 (3) Dropout prevention through farm engagement pilot projects
18 must have the following characteristics:

19 (a) Primarily target low-income and disengaged youth who have
20 dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of high school;

21 (b) Provide participating youth with opportunities for community
22 service such as building food gardens for low-income families and
23 work-based learning and employment during the school year and during
24 the summer through a farm or garden program;

25 (c) Provide participating youth with opportunities to earn core
26 credits and elective credits toward high school graduation, including
27 but not limited to science, health, and career and technical
28 education credits;

29 (d) Offer youth development support and services to participating
30 youth including social emotional learning, counseling, leadership
31 training, and career and college guidance; and

32 (e) Improve food security for participating youth and the
33 community through the farm or garden program.

34 (4) For each annual average full-time equivalent student enrolled
35 in the pilot project, including enrollment during the summer months,
36 the participating school district shall receive a basic education
37 allocation as calculated under RCW 28A.150.260 and the omnibus
38 appropriations act for a skill center student. The allocation under
39 this subsection does not apply to a student's enrollment in courses
40 of study that are not part of the pilot project. The allocations

1 provided for the pilot project may be used to supplement other
2 district and community funds to operate the project and to provide
3 summer employment stipends for participating youth.

4 (5) The purpose of the dropout prevention through farm engagement
5 pilot project is to measure the effectiveness and cost-benefit of a
6 particular alternative high school program on improving outcomes for
7 at-risk youth. The office of the superintendent of public instruction
8 shall conduct a rigorous evaluation after the pilot projects have
9 been operating for two years, including analysis of a statistical
10 comparison group of students who did not participate in the project.
11 The office shall submit the evaluation results to the education
12 committees of the legislature by December 1, 2019, including
13 recommendations for whether the pilot projects should be continued or
14 replicated in other parts of the state.

15 (6) Outcomes to be measured under the pilot project include:

16 (a) Student grade point average overall and in science;

17 (b) Number of earned credits in core courses and elective
18 courses;

19 (c) Incidence of discipline issues;

20 (d) School attendance rates;

21 (e) High school graduation and attainment of a high school
22 equivalency certificate as provided for in RCW 28B.50.536;

23 (f) Student health and nutrition;

24 (g) Acreage used for fresh produce;

25 (h) Volume of produce produced and made available to students,
26 families, school district food programs, and community food banks;
27 and

28 (i) Hours of community service activity by students.

29 (7) This section expires August 31, 2020.

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