
Education Committee

HB 1660

Brief Description: Concerning the participation of students who are low income in extracurricular activities.

Sponsors: Representatives Bergquist, Harris, Hudgins, Young, Tarleton, Ybarra, Slatter, Santos, Jinkins, Doglio, Fey, Leavitt, Ormsby and Valdez.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Defines certain goals for high schools related to the opportunity gap for associated student body (ASB) card acquisition and the opportunity gap for extracurricular activity participation.
- Requires that school districts with high schools that do not meet or exceed one or more of these goals develop, submit, and implement an opportunity gap reduction plan.
- Creates the Promoting Lively Activities for Youth grant program to subsidize small school districts impacted by discounted ASB card fees charged to high school students who are low income.
- Requires that the process for charging and collecting fees from high school students who are low income be identical to the process for charging and collecting fees from other students.
- Requires school boards to discount extracurricular activities participation fees for students who are low income.
- Requires that school districts with high schools collect and publish certain data related to ASB card purchases and student participation in extracurricular activities.

Hearing Date: 2/12/19

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

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.

Extracurricular Activities and Fees. Each school district board of directors has statutory authority to control, supervise, and regulate the conduct of interscholastic athletic and extracurricular activities for students of the district.

Each school district board of directors has statutory authority to establish and collect attendance fees for optional noncredit cultural, social, recreational, or athletic nature events. However, districts are required to waive or reduce these fees for students whose families would have difficulty paying the entire amount of the fee. The school board may also establish and collect an optional comprehensive fee for attendance at one or more events.

Associated Student Body. An associated student body (ASB) is a formal student organization at a school. An ASB is approved of and regulated by the school board. Some ASBs allow their members to purchase an ASB card, which identifies the student as a member of the school. The purchase of an ASB card is required for participation in some school-sponsored activities at some schools. An ASB card can often be used by a student to receive discounts, such as, on admission to home athletic games or dances, or the purchase of a year book.

School districts with one or more ASB programs must publish certain information about each ASB fund on the school or school district website each year.

Free and Reduced-Price Meals. In order for students to qualify for free school meals, their family's income must be at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level. Students whose families have an income between 130 percent and 185 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. As of May 2017, the number of public school students eligible for free or reduced price meals (FRPM) was 473,309 (or 43 percent).

Community Eligibility Provision. The Community Eligibility Provision of the federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act provides an alternative to household applications for FRPM by allowing schools with high numbers of low-income students to serve free meals to all enrolled students.

College Bound Scholarship Program. The College Bound Scholarship (CBS) program provides guaranteed four-year tuition to students from low-income families. Eligible students for the CBS include those who: (a) qualify for FRPM in grade 7; or (b) are dependent from parents or guardians, or are receiving extended foster care services and are either in grades 7 through 12 or are between the ages of 18 and 21 years and have not graduated from high school.

To be eligible to receive the CBS, a student must sign a pledge during grade 7 or 8 that includes a commitment to graduate from high school with at least a “C” grade average and no felony convictions. To receive the CBS, the student must graduate high school having fulfilled the CBS pledge requirements. Upon graduation, the student's family income will be assessed, and if it does not exceed 65 percent of the state median family income, the student will receive a scholarship.

Summary of Bill:

Definitions. The following terms are defined:

- "Extracurricular activities" means any optional noncredit cultural, social, recreational, or athletic event or program offered by a school district, including school clubs and school-based athletic programs.
- "High school student" means a public school student enrolled in any of grades 9 through 12.
- "Students who are low income" means students who are eligible to participate in the Free and Reduced-Price Meals Program (FRPM) or, if this data is unavailable, the College Bound Scholarship Program.

Data Collection, Reporting, and Publishing. Beginning April 1, 2020, and by April 1 annually thereafter, school districts with high schools must collect and report to the associated student body (ASB) executive board specific data related to ASB card purchase and student participation in school-based extracurricular activities. Beginning August 31, 2020, and by August 31 annually thereafter, school districts with high schools must collect and publish the data on their ASB website.

The data elements required to be collected, reported, and published are specified, examples include:

- the purchase amount of an ASB card for high school students and the discounted purchase amount for students who are low income;
- athletic program participation fees for high school students and any discounted fees for students who are low income;
- the number of high school students who purchased an ASB card and the number participating in an extracurricular activity;
- the opportunity gaps calculated as described below, and whether the school district has met the opportunity gap goals described below; and
- if required, the school district's opportunity gap reduction plan.

Upon request from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), school districts must provide a summary report of the collected data.

Calculation of Opportunity Gaps for Associated Student Body Card Acquisition and Extracurricular Activity Participation. A school district must calculate the opportunity gap for ASB card acquisition as the difference between the percentage of high school students who are low income and who purchased an ASB card, and the percentage of high school students who are not low income and who purchased an ASB card.

A school district must calculate the opportunity gap for extracurricular activity participation as the difference between the percentage of high school students who are low income and who participated in an extracurricular activity, and the percentage of high school students who are not low income and who participated in an extracurricular activity.

School districts may elect to exclude the number of students who are low income and who are participating in the Running Start Program (a program where high school students take classes on college campuses for dual credit) when calculating opportunity gaps.

Opportunity Gap Reduction Goals. High schools must meet specified goals for ASB card purchases and extracurricular activities participation, such as:

- for a high school that requires an ASB card only for participation school clubs, the goal is that 50 percent of high school students purchase an ASB card each school year;
- for a high school that requires an ASB card for participation in school clubs and school-based athletics, the goal is that 70 percent of high school students purchase an ASB card each school year;
- for high schools that require purchase of an ASB card for participation in any extracurricular activities or to receive any student discounts, the goal for the opportunity gap in acquisition of an ASB card reduces from 20 percentage points in the 2020-21 school year to 5 percentage points beginning in the 2024-25 school year; and
- for all high schools, the goal for the opportunity gap in extracurricular activity participation reduces from 20 percentage points in the 2010-21 school year to 5 percentage points beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

Opportunity Gap Reduction Plan. Beginning June 1, 2021, and by June 1 annually thereafter, a school district with a high school that does not meet or exceed one or more of the opportunity gap reduction goals must develop, submit, and implement an opportunity gap reduction plan.

When developing the plan, the school district must review recommendations from the ASB executive board. The plan must include at least one element from a list of policies and practices designed to reduce the opportunity gap and must add an additional element from the list for each year that a high school in the school district does not meet one or more of the opportunity gap reduction goals. The plan may include a school district-developed policy or practice.

The plan must be published on the high school's ASB website. The OSPI may review the plans and provide feedback and technical assistance to help school districts meet these requirements.

Promoting Lively Activities for Youth Grant Program. The Promoting Lively Activities for Youth (PLAY) Grant Program must be administered by the OSPI. Subject to state funding, and beginning in the 2019-20 school year, the OSPI must allocate up to \$250,000 per school year to high schools impacted by discounts on ASB card fees charged to high school students who are low income and that either: (1) are implementing the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP); or (2) have greater than 25 percent of high school students eligible to participate in the FRPM program. Application deadlines and criteria are specified.

The maximum PLAY grant award is \$5,000 per high school per year. Grant awards must be prioritized in the following order: (1) beginning in the 2020-21 school year, high schools that previously received a PLAY grant award; (2) high schools implementing the CEP; (3) high schools with the highest percentage of students eligible to participate in the FRPM program; and (4) high schools located in school districts enrolling 5,000 or fewer students.

By November 1, 2020, and by each November 1 thereafter, the OSPI must report to the Legislature with the following data: the number of PLAY grant applications; a summary of the information submitted with the applications; and the number and amount of grants awarded.

Streamlining Fee Collection. The process for charging and collecting ASB card fees, school-based extracurricular activities fees, and other fees from high school students who are low income must be identical to the process for charging and collecting fees from other students.

Fee Waivers. In addition to attendance fees, a school board may establish and collect participation fees for any optional noncredit extracurricular event of the district. For both attendance and participation fees, the school board must waive and reduce the fees for students who are eligible to participate in the FRPM program (rather than in cases of students whose families, by reason of their low income, would have difficulty paying the entire amount of the fee).

A list of optional noncredit extracurricular event attendance and participation fees and the school district policy for waiving or reducing these fees must be published on the ASB website.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 5, 2019.

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