

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2455

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 28, 2020
Ways & Means, March 2, 2020

Title: An act relating to supporting access to child care for parents who are attending high school or working toward completion of a high school equivalency certificate.

Brief Description: Supporting access to child care for parents who are attending high school or working toward completion of a high school equivalency certificate.

Sponsors: House Committee on Human Services & Early Learning (originally sponsored by Representatives Kilduff, Eslick, Senn, Ryu, Kloba, Valdez, Bergquist, Davis, Pollet, Goodman and Wylie; by request of Office of Financial Management).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/20, 66-32.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/24/20, 2/28/20 [DP-WM, w/oRec, DNP].

Ways & Means: 2/29/20, 3/02/20 [DP, w/oRec, DNP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes Working Connections Child Care eligibility and copayment requirements for a parent who is attending high school or is working toward completing a high school equivalency certificate.
- Requires school districts to provide transportation to students who request to transport their infant.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hunt, McCoy, Mullet, Pedersen and Salomon.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Holy and Padden.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

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.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; Wagoner.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair, Operating, Capital Lead; Mullet, Capital Budget Cabinet; Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Lias, Pedersen and Van De Wege.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Braun, Ranking Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Becker, Muzzall, Schoesler, Warnick and Wilson, L..

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Wagoner.

Staff: Sarah Emmans (786-7478)

Background: Working Connections Child Care. This federally and state-funded program provides child care subsidies to families with an income at or below 200 percent of federal poverty level—\$43,440 for a family of three. The state pays part of the cost of child care when a parent is employed, self-employed, or in approved activities, except in certain circumstances. The family is responsible for making a copayment to the child care provider based on the family's countable income. The minimum copayment is \$15 per month.

A Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) applicant or consumer not participating in WorkFirst and who is under 22 years of age may be eligible for WCCC benefits for a high school or general educational development—also known as GED—program without a minimum number of employment hours.

Transportation. The operation of each school district's student transportation program is declared to be the responsibility of the district's board of directors. A school district may authorize or provide, in whole or part, individual transportation for a student if it is approved by the educational service district superintendent or designee and meets certain requirements.

Summary of Bill: Working Connections Child Care. A parent who is attending high school or working toward a GED and is 21 or younger is eligible to receive WCCC. When determining consumer eligibility and copayment, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families:

- must, within existing resources, authorize full-day subsidized child care during the school year when certain requirements are met;
- may not consider the availability of the other biological parent when authorizing care; and
- may not require a copayment.

To receive authorization for full-day subsidized child care, a parent must:

- participate in 110 hours of approved activities per month;
- have a household income not exceeding 85 percent of the state median income at the time of application; and
- meet all other eligibility requirements.

Transportation. By July 1, 2021, at the request of an eligible student, a school district may allow the student to transport their infant on a school bus or other student transportation vehicle provided by the district. The infant must be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system as defined in the federal motor vehicle safety standards.

When a school district denies this request, it must authorize other arrangements for individual transportation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: A high school degree is critical in a global, competitive economy. This bill will help low-income, parenting teens earn this degree by providing child care and transportation. These services will help family stability, self-sufficiency, and breaking the cycle of poverty. Some individual school bus drivers are refusing to allow students with infants in carriers to ride the school bus. Federal law allows two ways for infant carriers to be transported on school buses. This bill would make sure school districts address this issue.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Representative Christine Kilduff, Prime Sponsor; Melanie Smith, Wellspring Family Services.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill is narrowly targeted to two of the biggest barriers that parenting high school students have to completing their education. These are access to child care and access to transportation. This bill will address both of these concerns. Individuals who fail to get a high school diploma or a graduation equivalency degree are materially compromised in their ability to provide for their families and are much more likely to end up on public assistance.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Melanie Smith, Wellspring Family Services.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.