

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6255

As of February 10, 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: Senators Wilson, C., Randall, Darneille, Lovelett, Das, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nguyen, Van De Wege and Hunt; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/24/20, 1/31/20 [DPS-WM, DNP].

Ways & Means: 2/10/20.

Brief Summary of First Substitute 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.
- Directs the Washington State School Directors' Association with developing a model policy and procedure that supports the educational success of pregnant students and parenting students and encourages school districts to adopt.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6255 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

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; Padden and Wagoner.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

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 FPL—\$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 a month.

A 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 (First Substitute): 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 (DCYF):

- 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 exceed 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.

Model Policy and Procedure. The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), must develop a model policy and procedure that supports the educational success of pregnant students and parenting students. The model must be available online by September 1, 2020. The model must include certain elements including:

- incorporating rules and guidelines to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex;
- identifying procedures for absences;
- identifying voluntary and alternative methods to keep students in school;
- addressing how the district will provide students a private location, other than a restroom, to allow privacy for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk; and
- addressing transportation.

By the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, each school district is encouraged to adopt or amend a policy and procedure that incorporates the model.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Provides that a parent 21 or younger working toward completing a GED is eligible for WCCC.
- Removes the requirement that DCYF treat the parent as his or her own household when determining household income.
- Adds that WSSDA, in collaboration with OSPI, develop a model policy and procedure that supports the educational success of pregnant students and parenting students.
- Encourages school districts to adopt or amend a policy and procedure by the beginning of the 2021-22 school year that incorporates the model.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2020.

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

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: All students should have the opportunity to succeed and fulfill their potential. This bill supports young parents who are working toward completing their high school education and who will serve as a model for their children. Child care and transportation are the biggest barriers for young parents trying to finish high school. The changes in this bill will not be too expensive, but they will be meaningful. It will also help eliminate unlawful discrimination against parenting students.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Melanie Smith, Washington Anti-Poverty Advocates Group; Michelle Spenser, The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction'.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill will make it easier for young parents to finish their education and thus improve their lives and the lives of their children. Child care and transportation are real barriers for young parents trying to finish high school. This is a population that needs a lot of support. This bill is not a huge investment for the state but will make a big difference for the people it would serve.

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

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