
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5859

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Mullet, Salomon, Wilson, C., Nguyen, and Wellman)

READ FIRST TIME 02/22/19.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving high school graduation success by
2 investing in educational mentor programs; adding a new section to
3 chapter 28A.600 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature has established that
6 the purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is
7 ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and
8 citizenship. According to the office of the superintendent of public
9 instruction, one in five high school seniors does not graduate on
10 time. Lack of a high school diploma, or its equivalent, can have
11 lifelong, negative financial, social, and health-related impacts. The
12 legislature recognizes that the benefits of high school graduation
13 are numerous for young people and their communities, and as a result,
14 communities have a shared stake in supporting high school students,
15 especially those from underrepresented populations, in their efforts
16 to graduate from high school.

17 (2)(a) The legislature recognizes that community-based mentoring
18 is an effective strategy for improving high school graduation rates
19 and academic achievement. Mentorships are a match between a mentor
20 and a mentee, where the mentor provides one-to-one guidance and
21 support. Mentors are role models, advisers, and advocates.

1 (b) Mentors who intervene when a student exhibits early warning
2 signs for not completing high school can help the student identify
3 and overcome barriers to academic success. Pairing a young person
4 with a supportive, nonfamily member can significantly and positively
5 affect that young person's path to adulthood. Mentors can provide
6 personal and social support, as well as academic and career guidance.
7 For example, a mentor can guide a student to continue their education
8 past high school in a manner that is most appropriate for the
9 student, thus improving the student's lifelong earning potential.

10 (c) Research indicates that strong mentorship programs can
11 improve academic performance. A mentorship with a committed, caring
12 adult from a student's community can also increase the student's
13 self-confidence, resiliency, and problem solving and conflict
14 resolution skills. In addition, participating in a mentorship program
15 can improve students' attitudes about school attendance and
16 completion, improve their social skills and behavior, strengthen
17 their peer and family relationships, and increase their sense of
18 belonging in school. Thus, mentorships can be transformational
19 experiences that provide students with the skills and knowledge they
20 need for future postsecondary education, gainful employment, and
21 citizenship.

22 (3) The legislature intends to improve high school graduation
23 rates for high school students from underrepresented populations by
24 investing in educational community-based mentorship programs.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.600
26 RCW to read as follows:

27 (1) The educational mentor grant program is created to increase
28 graduation rates for high school students from underrepresented
29 populations by expanding the programs of community-based
30 organizations that match participating students with an unpaid,
31 committed, caring adult from the student's community.

32 (2)(a) By August 1, 2019, and by August 1st every three years
33 thereafter, the office of the superintendent of public instruction
34 must select, through an application process developed for this
35 purpose, community-based organizations that meet the requirements of
36 this subsection. A selected organization must be a direct service
37 provider with a minimum of ten years of experience delivering one-to-
38 one mentoring and must:

1 (i) Have demonstrated success in offering a mentorship program
2 that adheres to national benchmarks for effective mentoring practices
3 and increases high school graduation rates for high school students
4 from demographic groups that have low graduation rates;

5 (ii) Demonstrate capacity to expand the mentorship program;

6 (iii) Match participating high school students from
7 underrepresented populations with committed, caring adults from the
8 students' communities;

9 (iv) Agree to screen and train adults before matching them with
10 students;

11 (v) Introduce students to a variety of postsecondary school
12 options and ensure that every participating senior has a posthigh
13 school plan for economic stability;

14 (vi) Maintain cash or in-kind donations from private sources; and

15 (vii) Agree to collaborate with the office of the superintendent
16 of public instruction to create the report required under subsection
17 (5) of this section, by, for example, administering a student
18 satisfaction survey.

19 (b) At least one of the selected organizations must primarily
20 serve students east of the crest of the Cascade mountain range and at
21 least one must primarily serve students west of the crest of the
22 Cascade mountain range. At least one of the selected organizations
23 must primarily serve students from rural areas.

24 (3) (a) Subject to amounts appropriated for this specific purpose,
25 the office of the superintendent of public instruction must
26 distribute a three-year grant to the selected community-based
27 organizations. Money received by a grant recipient in one year of the
28 program may be retained for use in subsequent years.

29 (b) This grant must be used to expand community-based mentorship
30 programs offered by a grant recipient. A portion of each grant may be
31 used to operate the community-based organization. For the purposes of
32 this section, "expand" means to increase the number of high school
33 students from underrepresented populations in the mentorship program
34 from the number in the program during the school year prior to the
35 awarding of the grant.

36 (4) By November 15, 2019, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036,
37 the office of the superintendent of public instruction must provide a
38 report to the appropriate committees of the legislature that
39 describes the application process developed for the grant program and

1 provides information about the organizations selected to receive the
2 first three-year grants.

3 (5) (a) By November 15, 2021, and by November 15th of every third
4 year thereafter, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the office of
5 the superintendent of public instruction must provide a report to the
6 appropriate committees of the legislature that:

7 (i) Details how, and the extent to which, the grants were used to
8 expand community-based mentorship programs;

9 (ii) Provides demographic information on the students served by
10 the grant recipients;

11 (iii) Summarizes the results of student satisfaction surveys
12 administered by the grant recipients;

13 (iv) Provides, to the extent the data is available, graduation
14 rates and posthigh school training and education data, such as
15 enrollment in and completion of apprenticeship programs, certificate
16 programs, two-year programs, and four-year programs; and

17 (v) Includes recommendations for continuing, modifying, or
18 expanding the grant program.

19 (b) Data on students served by the grant recipient's mentorship
20 programs must be compared, wherever practicable, to data on students
21 who would have been eligible for the programs, but were not served by
22 the grant recipients.

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