
Appropriations Committee

HB 2053

Brief Description: Establishing the ninth grade success grant program.

Sponsors: Representatives Stonier, Steele, Ramos, Corry, Reed, Ormsby, Callan, Timmons, Ortiz-Self, Fosse, Doglio, Riccelli, Cortes, Reeves and Paul.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes the Ninth Grade Success Grant Program, which funds the creation of ninth grade success teams to identify and support incoming high school students who are at risk of not graduating.

Hearing Date: 1/17/24

Staff: Jordan Clarke (786-7123).

Background:

The Legislature appropriated \$250,000 during the 2019-21 Biennial Operating Budget to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for a pilot program to identify and support incoming high school students who were at risk of not graduating. Five school districts were selected to participate in the pilot program based on their Ninth Grade On-Track scores in the Washington School Improvement Framework and their higher-than-average enrollment of students classified as low-income or English language learners. The districts were Ellensburg, Grandview, Moses Lake, Toppenish, and Wahluke.

The five pilot districts created success teams of educators composed of ninth grade teachers, administrators, counselors, and student support staff. The teams regularly reviewed attendance, behavior, and course performance to deploy strategic supports to students showing early signs of falling behind. Each pilot district received \$21,000 in funding to pay for data systems, release

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time for educators to staff the success teams, student supports, and travel expenses related to professional development.

Since the 2021-22 school year, the OSPI has expanded the pilot program using funding provided by the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. Federal deadlines require ESSER funds to be obligated by September 30, 2024.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the OSPI must establish and administer the Ninth Grade Success Grant Program (Grant Program). The purpose of the Grant Program is to fund the creation of ninth grade success teams to identify and support incoming high school students who are at risk of not graduating.

Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, the OSPI must award grants to eligible public schools. When awarding grants, the OSPI must prioritize schools with low ninth grade on-track scores as identified through the Washington School Improvement Framework and schools that have graduation rates below the statewide average. The OSPI must attempt to award grants to public schools in different geographic regions of the state.

Grant recipients may use the funding for costs associated with establishing and operating a ninth grade success team program, including:

- providing additional compensation or stipends for success team members;
- providing related professional development and training for success team members;
- hiring substitute teachers during periods when success team members are performing program duties and training; and
- providing student supports needed to help ninth grade students thrive.

The OSPI may contract with a qualified nonprofit organization that has experience coaching school success teams to provide individualized coaching to grant recipients.

By June 30, 2025, and annually thereafter until 2030, the OSPI must report to the Governor and the education committees of the Legislature on the implementation of the Grant Program. The report must include:

- the number of grants awarded and which schools received an award, organized by geographic location;
- the demographics of the students served by recipient schools' ninth grade success teams, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, students receiving free or reduced price lunch, students receiving special education services, students receiving transitional bilingual instruction, students in foster care, and students experiencing homelessness;
- data comparing each recipient school's ninth grade on-track scores before and after implementing ninth grade success teams;
- longitudinal data on graduation rates for recipient schools, if available; and
- recommendations for statutory improvements, resource needs, or opportunities for

scalability.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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