
Postsecondary Education & Workforce Committee

HB 2077

Brief Description: Concerning participation in the Washington guaranteed admissions program.

Sponsors: Representatives Reed, Bergquist and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires all public school districts that operate a high school and certain institutions of higher education to participate in the Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program (WAGAP).
- Provides students and parents and guardians an option to opt out of the WAGAP.
- Creates a notice to high school students detailing financial aid opportunities and career and technical pathways.

Hearing Date: 1/24/24

Staff: Saranda Ross (786-7068).

Background:

Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program.

The Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program (WAGAP) supports guaranteed admissions efforts at the following participating institutions of higher education: Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, The Evergreen State College, University of Washington Tacoma, Washington State University and Western Washington University. There are 131 combined public school districts and school partners participating in the WAGAP.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Guaranteed admissions offers admission to a student and then requires the student to apply to the institution, as opposed to general admissions which requires a student to first apply to the institution and then potentially be offered admission. Guaranteed admissions does not guarantee enrollment in a specific degree program.

To be eligible for the WAGAP, students must:

- earn a 3.0 cumulative GPA; and
- complete all of Washington's College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs).

CADRs are the minimum number of high school course credits required in six subject areas to meet state minimum admission standards at Washington public four-year institutions. CADRS include:

- English—4 credits;
- Math—3 credits;
- Science—3 credits;
- Social Sciences—3 credits;
- World Language—2 credits;
- Art—1 credit; and
- Senior Year Math-based Quantitative Course—1 credit.

The Council of Presidents.

The Council of Presidents (COP) is a voluntary association of Washington's six public four-year institutions of higher education. The COP works to advance collaboration, cooperation, and efficiency across public four-year institutions.

Washington Student Achievement Council.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is a state agency consisting of nine voting members. The WSAC provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and program administration to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment. The Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office) operates within the WSAC. The Office administers state and federal financial aid and other education service programs.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matters pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and its office (OSPI) has numerous and broad responsibilities prescribed in statute, including:

- making rules and regulations necessary for the administration of public education requirements;
- preparing courses of study and other materials and books for the discharge of education duties;
- fulfilling financial responsibilities, including distributing legislatively allocated funds to districts for the operation of the public school system, and awarding numerous state and federally funded grants; and
- satisfying numerous reporting and other duties assigned by the Legislature.

Washington School Counselor Association.

The Washington School Counselor Association (Association) is a professional organization that represents over 1,000 school counselors, school counselor educators, and graduate students in Washington. The Association works to further develop Professional School Counselors' expertise.

Summary of Bill:

By January 1, 2025, the following institutions of higher education must continue to participate in the WAGAP:

- at least one University of Washington campus;
- at least one Washington State University campus;
- Western Washington University;
- Central Washington University;
- Eastern Washington University; and
- The Evergreen State College.

Beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, public school districts that operate a high school must enter into a data-sharing agreement with participating institutions of higher education to facilitate the transfer of eleventh and twelfth grade high school student data that meets the WAGAP criteria determined by the COP in collaboration with the WSAC by September 30, 2025. The COP is responsible for storing the student data and eligibility criteria must be reviewed annually.

Public school districts must work with the COP to create a notification about the WAGAP and general admissions. Public school districts that operate a high school must send the notification to students and their parent or guardian beginning in the 2025-26 academic year. The notifications must provide parents or guardians an opportunity to opt their student out of the WAGAP.

Beginning December 10, 2026, and each year thereafter until December 31, 2031, the COP must submit an annual report to the Legislature on the WAGAP that includes the eligibility criteria and changes made to the WAGAP in the prior academic year.

The WSAC must collaborate with the OSPI, COP, and the Association to create a notice detailing the definitions and eligibility criteria for the following programs or initiatives:

- the WAGAP;
- the Washington College Grant;
- dual credit programs such as Running Start and College in The High School;
- career and technical education programs;
- two-year college pathways;
- the free application for federal student aid; and
- the Washington application for state financial aid.

The OSPI disseminates this notice to public school districts that operate a high school, which then disseminate it to ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students and their parents or guardians starting with the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year, but no later than November of each academic year. Also beginning in the 2024-25 academic year, public school districts that operate a high school must designate a staff member or create a virtual resource for students to learn more about the information in the notice.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2024.

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