

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1658

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 27, 2023

Title: An act relating to authorizing public high school students to earn elective credit for paid work experience.

Brief Description: Authorizing public high school students to earn elective credit for paid work experience.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Shavers, Santos, Morgan, Ramel, Taylor and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/2/23, 93-4.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/22/23, 3/27/23 [DP, DNP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes high school students aged 16 and over to earn up to two elective credits through paid work experience if specified requirements are met.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt and periodically revise rules to implement the elective credit through paid work experience provisions.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Dozier, Hunt, McCune and Pedersen.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Mullet.

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.

Staff: Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: Graduation Requirements. To qualify for a high school diploma, public school students must satisfy credit and subject area requirements established by the Legislature and the State Board of Education (SBE), fulfill any locally established requirements, complete a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP), and meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway option.

Graduating students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas as determined by SBE. Of the required credits, 17 are in core subject areas such as, English language arts, mathematics, and science. The remaining seven credits are more flexible; four are elective credits and three are personalized pathways credits determined by the student's interests and their HSBP. In limited circumstances, waivers for credit and subject area requirements can be granted to students.

On August 4, 2022, the Superintendent of Public Instruction announced a proposal to allow students aged 16 and over to earn up to four elective credits toward their high school diploma through paid work experience that is verified by their school. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) indicated its intent to initiate rulemaking for this proposal, with the objective of implementing the program for the 2023-24 school year.

State Learning Standards/Financial Education Learning Standards. Washington's program of basic education establishes four goals for school districts pertaining to the opportunity for every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential for practicing certain academic skills and concepts. The fourth goal addresses the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

In 2015, financial education learning standards developed by a national coalition for personal finance literacy were adopted in statute as the state financial education learning standards. In 2016, OSPI, in accordance with its duty to develop state learning standards based on the four basic education goals, adopted financial education learning standards for public school students in all grades.

OSPI, subject to consultation requirements with the Financial Education Public-Private Partnership, is required to make available to all school districts a list of materials that align with the financial education learning standards.

School districts must provide all students in grades 9 through 12 with the opportunity to access the financial education learning standards. School districts also must publicize the availability of financial education opportunities to students and families, and they are encouraged to grant credit toward high school graduation requirements to students who successfully complete financial education courses.

Summary of Bill: Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, public high school students aged 16 years and older may earn up to two elective high school credits through paid work experience, provided specified requirements are met.

Proposals for earning elective high school credits through paid work experience must:

- be approved in advance and in writing by the applicable school counselor, principal, or designee of the principal and a work-based sponsor who will serve as the point of contact for the employer and participate in supervising the student during the student's employment;
- be reflected in the student's HSBP;
- include a student narrative describing how the paid work experience will enable the student to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the goals of basic education, including and in particular those essential to understanding the importance of work and finance;
- include provisions for demonstrating or otherwise assessing the student's grade-level proficiencies on the state financial education learning standards for employment and income or financial decisions; and
- include provisions for demonstrating or otherwise assessing the student's growth in proficiency in meeting the state financial education learning standards occurring between prework and postwork experiences.

One-half elective high school credit will be awarded for each 180 hours of paid and verified work experience to students who, as determined by the appropriate school official, meet the requirements for earning elective credit through paid work experience. High school credit may not be awarded for prior paid work experiences.

Proposals for earning elective credit through paid work experience may only be approved at high schools that provide students with the opportunity to learn and master the state financial education learning standards.

OSPI must adopt rules to implement the elective credit through paid work experience provisions. The rules must permit school districts to award credit to students in accordance with applicable requirements for work occurring outside of the regular school calendar. Schools may not approve a student's proposal for earning elective high school credit through paid work experience before OSPI rules have been adopted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: PRO: There are many students from low-income families that have to work to support their families, and many others who want to work to get professional work experience but can't because of a rigorous academic schedule. There is also a need for more financial literacy work in our schools. This pairs the two and provides equitable access to building leadership skills and professional development. This continues lifting the value of work, and plays a role in economic vitality. Students who work also do better in post-secondary environments. This will increase student engagement and recognize the value of work experience as hands-on skill development. A few changes are requested: remove language prohibiting school districts until after rules have passed; decrease the number of work hours to 120/0.5 credit and 240/1 credit and tie them to core credits; and remove the attachment to financial literacy standards.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Clyde Shavers, Prime Sponsor; Alissa Muller, Washington State Board of Education; Melissa Stone, Washington State PTA; Becky Wallace, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Carolyn Logue, Washington Food Industry Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.