

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5243

As Amended by House, April 7, 2023

Title: An act relating to high school and beyond planning.

Brief Description: Concerning high school and beyond planning.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Hunt, Kuderer, Nobles and Wilson, C.; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/23/23, 1/30/23 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/09/23, 2/20/23 [DP2S, w/oRec].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 3/3/23, 48-0.
Passed House: 4/7/23, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Revises high school and beyond plan (HSBP) requirements.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to facilitate the transition to and adoption of a common online platform for HSBPs.
- Requires OSPI to develop and submit to the Governor and Legislature a preliminary list of existing vendors who can provide or build an online platform, along with estimated costs, by January 1, 2024.
- Specifies requirements for an online HSBP platform.
- Requires school districts to provide access to an adopted universal platform within two years of platform development.
- Directs OSPI and the State Board of Education to submit recommendations on additional policy changes related to HSBPs.
- Repeals provisions relating to student learning plans.

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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5243 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5243 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair, Operating & Revenue; Mullet, Vice Chair, Capital; Wilson, L., Ranking Member, Operating; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Rivers, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Billig, Conway, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Muzzall, Nguyen, Pedersen, Saldaña, Torres, Van De Wege, Wagoner and Wellman.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Schoesler, Ranking Member, Capital; Boehnke and Braun.

Staff: Trevor Press (786-7446)

Background: Graduation Requirements—Overview. To qualify for graduation from a public high school in Washington, students must satisfy course and credit requirements established by the State Board of Education (SBE), meet any locally established requirements, complete a high school and beyond plan (HSBP), and meet the requirements of at least one graduation pathway option.

High School and Beyond Plan. All high school students must have a HSBP. Each HSBP must be initiated in seventh- or eighth-grade with a career interest and skills inventory. The plan must be updated to reflect high school assessment results, and must identify available interventions and academic support for students who are not on track to graduate.

All plans must include, among other items, an identification of career and educational goals, identification of dual credit opportunities, information on certain scholarship opportunities, and a four-year plan for course taking. Decisions on whether a student has met HSBP requirements are made at the local level.

Student Learning Plans. Districts are required to prepare student learning plans for eighth-grade students who were not successful on any or all of the content areas of the state assessment in the previous school year, or who are not on track to graduate due to credit deficiencies or absences.

Student learning plans must contain certain information, including assessment results, credit deficiencies, attendance rates, academic progress, remediation strategies, and programs available to help meet graduation requirements.

Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill: High School and Beyond Plan Requirements. In addition to existing HSBP requirements, beginning by the seventh-grade, each student must be administered a career interest and skills inventory which is intended to be used to inform eighth-grade course taking and development of an HSBP. No later than either grade, each student must have begun development of an HSBP that includes a proposed plan for first-year high school courses aligned with graduation requirements and secondary and postsecondary goals.

School districts are to provide students who have not met standards on state assessments or are behind in requirements, with opportunities to access certain interventions, academic supports, and courses, with parental notification.

An HSBP must be provided in a language that the student and parents or legal guardians understand, and in accordance with the school district's language access policy and procedures. HSBPs must also include information on the potential impacts of a student's course selection on postsecondary opportunities, and information on opportunities for partial credit accrual, including mastery-based credit.

Additional HSBP requirements are added, including that it comply with student privacy requirements, facilitates automatic import of data, that it includes in-state labor market and postsecondary education performance data, and the ability for school districts to customize or add features unique to local needs.

School districts are strongly encouraged to partner with student serving community-based organizations that support career and college exploration and preparation for postsecondary and career pathways.

Statewide Online High School and Beyond Plan Platform. OSPI must facilitate the transition to a universal online platform for the HSBP, and develop a preliminary list of existing vendors who can provide or build a platform. OSPI must submit this list and estimated transition costs to the Governor and education policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature by January 1, 2024, and must include an estimated transition timeline for statewide implementation. OSPI must select the vendor by June 1, 2024, subject to appropriation.

The statewide online platform must meet certain requirements, including the incorporation of career exploration opportunities, accessibility options, the ability to develop support and recovery plans, and other provisions.

OSPI must develop an implementation plan for completing statewide implementation of a universal HSBP planning tool by October 1, 2024. The implementation plan must include both an estimated timeline and updated cost estimates, including the technical assistance, technology updates, ongoing maintenance requirements, and adjustments to the technology funding formula, and statewide development that may be needed. The plan may also include a cost alternative for educational service districts to host the universal platform for school districts with fewer than 2000 pupils when such a district does not have sufficient technology resources to implement and maintain the universal platform.

Within two years of completion of platform development, school districts must provide students with access to the adopted universal platform, with technical assistance provided by OSPI. In carrying out these requirements, OSPI shall seek input from various groups and organizations.

Proposed Legislation Establishing a New High School and Beyond Plan. After selection of the vendor for a universal HSBP platform, OSPI shall report recommendations for additional policy changes related to the HSBP platform to the Governor and education committees of the Legislature. The recommendations should examine and include:

- a way to begin student use of a learning plan that utilizes the universal platform no later than the fifth grade;
- strategies for students to share their interests and engage with peers and mentors in order to obtain ongoing feedback and access to activities and learning opportunities that connect with their goals;
- recommended calendar, schedule and delivery options for students updating their plans multiple times per year; and
- strategies to increase student and family engagement.

The State Board of Education (SBE) shall develop recommendations on how the HSBP could be modified to further support student choice and flexibility in meeting graduation requirements and preparing for postsecondary education and training, including increasing access to mastery-based learning and mastery-based crediting opportunities.

Both reports shall be submitted to the Governor and education committees of the Legislature by August 1, 2025.

Student Learning Plans. Provisions relating to student learning plans are repealed.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

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 on First Substitute (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: HSBPs vary widely by districts, including how meaningful they are in the counseling process. A universal HSBP platform could lead to a more customized plan with assistance and input from educators from around the state. Utilizing a statewide platform would help to spread positive work throughout the state. A uniform platform would allow parents and educators to access plans and would allow students to continue to use their plan if they change schools.

CON: It is not always clear how it is determined that students have met the standards required by law.

OTHER: Good platform options already exist for HSBP. Switching platforms can lead to additional training and support. Many districts have invested resources in their current platforms.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Jayme Shoun, Washington STEM; Natalya Yudkovsky, Washington State PTA; Jenny Plaja, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); J. Lee Schultz, Washington State Board of Education.

CON: Andy Cilley, Parents.

OTHER: Kate Atvars, Lake Washington School District.

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): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: High school and beyond plans are often not useful working documents and are not known about by parents. The current ratio of students to counselors is 400:1. There is no way for counselors to know every student and their aspirations. This planning should begin in 5th grade and be an exploratorium. This plan will eliminate language barriers and promote accessibility. The committee should consider some additional aspects that would strengthen the bill including adding a high school and beyond coordinator, that running start students are integrated, and review of these plans.

OTHER: This bill will be excellent for consistency, however the implementation timeline is too fast for a full transition and it is unclear how funding will be provided.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Natalya Yudkovsky, Washington State PTA.

OTHER: Kate Atvars, Lake Washington School District; Margaret Rice, Washougal School District.

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

EFFECT OF HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

- Requires OSPI to ensure that the universal platform for HSBPs will permit transition plans for qualifying students with individualized education programs (IEPs) to be incorporated into the universal platform in a manner that eliminates the need to create duplicate or substantially similar transition plans in other electronic or non-electronic formats.
- Removes provisions requiring OSPI, for purposes of the universal platform, to include considerations about how the universal platform will operate in alignment with transition plans required for qualifying students with IEPs for the purpose of creating efficiencies and reducing redundancies with the HSBP process and the statewide tool (universal platform).