

---

**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5850**

---

**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Braun, Wellman, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Mullet, Randall, Torres, Valdez, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to supporting students who are chronically absent  
2 and at risk for not graduating high school; adding a new section to  
3 chapter 28A.310 RCW; creating new sections; and providing expiration  
4 dates.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.310  
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
9 specific purpose, each educational service district must develop and  
10 maintain the capacity to offer training and coaching for educators  
11 and other school district staff, including those designated under RCW  
12 28A.225.026 to address excessive absenteeism and truancy, on the  
13 development of robust early warning systems to identify and locate  
14 students who are chronically absent and connect them with the  
15 necessary supports to reengage them in academic learning. The  
16 training and coaching must include collecting, analyzing, and  
17 reporting early warning data, including attendance and other relevant  
18 data.

19 (2) For the purposes of this section:

20 (a) "Necessary supports" may include engagement with families;  
21 academic, systemic, and economic supports; adequate and appropriate

1 clothing; food and nutrition; transportation; connecting students to  
2 behavioral health supports; and incentives and celebrations of  
3 students' attendance and engagement in the classroom.

4 (b) "Students who are chronically absent" means students who miss  
5 10 percent or more of their school days for any reason including  
6 excused and unexcused absences and suspensions.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
8 appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the  
9 superintendent of public instruction shall establish a grant program  
10 to support students who are chronically absent.

11 (2) (a) The purpose of the grant program is to provide funding to  
12 support strategies to identify and locate students who are  
13 chronically absent and connect them with the necessary supports to  
14 reengage them in academic learning.

15 (b) Grant funds may be used for the following strategies and  
16 supports:

17 (i) Proactive engagement with all families about the impact of  
18 attendance on student outcomes;

19 (ii) Clear, supportive, and solution-oriented communication with  
20 families and caregivers of students who are chronically absent;

21 (iii) Visits to families of students who are chronically absent;

22 (iv) Academic, systemic, and economic supports for the families  
23 of students who are chronically absent, including removing barriers  
24 to students attending school as well as tutoring and mentoring  
25 students who are reengaging in the classroom;

26 (v) Connecting students to behavioral health supports; and

27 (vi) Incentives and celebrations of students' improved attendance  
28 and engagement in the classroom.

29 (3) Community-based organizations, tribes, and community and  
30 technical colleges may apply for these grants.

31 (4) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may  
32 adopt rules for the grant program established under this section.

33 (5) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may  
34 require the recipient of grant funding to report the impacts of the  
35 recipient's efforts in alignment with the measures of the Washington  
36 school improvement framework.

37 (6) For the purposes of this section, "students who are  
38 chronically absent" has the same meaning as in section 1 of this act.

39 (7) This section expires December 31, 2026.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
2 appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the  
3 superintendent of public instruction must allocate funding to  
4 educational service districts, school districts, public schools, and  
5 community and technical colleges to help eliminate barriers to high  
6 school completion for students who are enrolled in a statewide  
7 dropout reengagement program as defined in RCW 28A.175.105. Given  
8 that these students have varied needs, the use of these funds are  
9 flexible and can be used for supports such as:

10        (a) Academic supports such as covering testing fees, calculators,  
11 and laboratory and other school supplies;

12        (b) Adequate and appropriate clothing, including specific items  
13 needed for particular courses, such as work boots, gloves, and other  
14 items;

15        (c) Adequate and reliable access to food and nutrition;

16        (d) Transportation, including bus passes, gas vouchers, and  
17 subsidized parking;

18        (e) Connecting students to behavioral health supports; and

19        (f) Contracting with nationally recognized providers of chronic  
20 absenteeism programs.

21        (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must  
22 allocate funding on a per-student basis to educational service  
23 districts, school districts, and public schools based on student  
24 enrollment in a statewide dropout reengagement program as defined in  
25 RCW 28A.175.105. The allocation of funding for either small school  
26 districts or rural school districts, or both, must be differentiated  
27 and include a base amount of funding.

28        (3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may  
29 adopt rules to implement this section.

30        (4) For the purposes of this section, "public schools" has the  
31 same meaning as in RCW 28A.150.010.

32        (5) This section expires December 31, 2026.

--- END ---