
Education Committee

ESSB 6403

Brief Description: Regarding accountability and support for vulnerable students and dropouts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kauffman, McAuliffe, Hargrove, Hobbs, Regala, Oemig, McDermott and Shin; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Recognizes the financial cost of dropouts and the need for the development of a collaborative infrastructure at the local, regional, and state levels between systems that serve vulnerable students.
- Expands the Building Bridges work group.
- Tasks state agency work group members to work together on various activities to support school/family/community partnerships engaged in building K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement systems.
- Adds definitions and several new reporting requirements.

Hearing Date: 2/17/10

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

The overall graduation rate in Washington and in the nation is around 70 percent, according to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reported in the executive summary to its latest report, *Graduation and Dropout Statistics for 2007-08*, that:

"In school year 2007–08, just over 18,000 students in grades 9–12 dropped out, 5.6 percent of all high school students. This is essentially not different from the 5.5 percent in 2006-07. Males dropped out at a higher rate than females, and over 10 percent of American Indian and 9 percent of Black students dropped out of high school during the year. Of the students who

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began grade 9 in the fall of 2004 and were expected to graduate in 2008, 21.4 percent dropped out, an increase of 1.4 percent from 2006-07. Seventy-two percent of the estimated cohort of students graduated “on-time” and 7.6 percent were still enrolled in school at the end of grade 12. An additional 5 percent graduated after their expected year, so the “extended” graduation rate was 77 percent. Both the “on-time” and “extended” graduation rates were 0.5 percent lower than 2006-07. Asian and White students had the highest on-time graduation rates (80.5% and 75.4%, respectively) while only 47.9 percent of the American Indian students had graduated by the end of the four-year period.”

According to a 2007 report entitled *The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children*, the benefit to taxpayers of a prevented drop-out, over the adult working lifetime of the individual, has a present value of approximately \$236,000 in 2009 dollars. This represents a savings of public expense of approximately \$10,500 per year for each such individual.

In 2007, a statutory framework for a statewide comprehensive drop-out prevention, intervention, and retrieval system was put in place. The OSPI was directed to create a grant program, known as the Building Bridges Program, to begin the phase-in of this statewide comprehensive drop-out prevention, intervention, and retrieval system. A state-level work group, the Building Bridges work group, was tasked with assisting and enhancing the work of the grantees.

The Quality Education Council (QEC) was created in 2009 to recommend and inform the ongoing legislative implementation of a program of basic education and necessary financing. The QEC is composed of eight legislative members, and one representative each from the Office of the Governor, the OSPI, the State Board of Education (SBE), the Professional Educators Standards Board, and the Department of Early Learning (DEL).

The Legislature has directed the establishment of a comprehensive K-12 education data improvement system for financial, student, and educator data. Among the required elements is a subset of student information elements to serve as a drop-out early warning system.

Summary of Bill:

Findings/Intent.

Facilitating the development of a collaborative infrastructure at the local, regional, and state levels between systems that serve vulnerable students is the stated intent of this OSPI-request legislation. Specific findings called out that explain the underlying purpose and intent are:

- the annual financial savings that can be realized by preventing high school dropouts;
- school districts' need for both accountability and technical assistance to improve graduation rates;
- the need for adequate drop-out prevention, intervention, and re-engagement systems to prevent vulnerable students from dropping out; and
- school districts' need for support in the local community to prevent dropouts.

Definition Section Added.

Several new terms are defined in statute:

- 1) "Critical community members" means representatives in the local community from student/parent organizations, parents and families, local government, law enforcement, juvenile

corrections, any tribal organization in the local school district, the local health district, non-profit and social service organizations serving youth, and faith organizations.

2) "Dropout early warning and intervention data system" means a student information system that provides the data needed to conduct a universal screening to identify students at risk of dropping out, catalog student interventions, and monitor student progress towards graduation.

3) "K-12 dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system" means a system that provides *all* of the following functions:

- engaging in school improvement planning;
- providing prevention activities;
- identifying vulnerable students based on a drop-out early warning and intervention data system;
- timely academic and non-academic group and individual interventions for vulnerable students based on a response to intervention models;
- providing graduation coaches, mentors, and/or case managers for vulnerable students identified as needing a more intensive one-on-one adult relationship;
- establishing and providing staff to coordinate a school/family/community partnership that assists in building a K-12 drop-out prevention, intervention, and re-engagement system;
- providing retrieval or reentry activities; and
- providing alternative educational programming.

4) "School/family/community partnership" means a partnership between a school or schools, families, and the community that engages critical community members in a formal, structured partnership with local school districts in a coordinated effort to provide comprehensive support services and improve outcomes for vulnerable youth.

5) "Vulnerable students" are defined as students who are in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system, receiving special education services, recent immigrants, homeless, emotionally traumatized, or who are facing behavioral health issues, as well as students deemed at-risk of school failure as identified by a drop-out early warning data system or other assessment.

Recommendations Required Regarding Technical Assistance for Districts.

In collaboration with the Building Bridges work group, the OSPI must develop and report recommendations for the development of a comprehensive, K-12 drop-out prevention reduction initiative designed to integrate many tiers of prevention, intervention, and technical assistance provided through federal and state programs. These recommendations are due to the QEC and the Legislature by September 15, 2010.

Additions to the Building Bridges Work Group.

Composition of the work group is changed to add representatives from the DEL, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the community mobilization office. The divisions and offices within the Department of Social and Health Services that must be represented on the work group are specifically called out as: children's services; juvenile rehabilitation; behavioral health and recovery; and the office of juvenile justice. Representatives from the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee and the Office of the Education Ombudsman should be included.

It remains the OSPI's responsibility to establish the work group. In addition, the OSPI is to appoint its own representative to the work group.

State Agency Members of the Building Bridges Work Group Must Work Together.

The various state agencies represented on the work group must work together to:

- provide opportunities for coordination and flexibility of program eligibility and funding criteria;
- provide joint funding where feasible;
- develop protocols and templates for model agreements on sharing records and data; and
- provide joint profession development opportunities regarding research-based practices, the availability of programs and services for vulnerable youth, and cultural competence.

New Building Bridges Work Group Reporting Requirements Added.

The annual report to the Legislature and the Governor that is currently required of the Building Bridges work group must also be provided to the QEC and must include proposed strategies for building dropout prevention, intervention, and re-engagement systems in local communities.

In addition, by September 15, 2010, the Building Bridges work group must report to the QEC, the Legislature, and the Governor on:

- recommended state goals and annual targets for the percentage of students graduating from high school;
- recommended state goals and annual targets for the percentage of youth who have dropped out who should be re-engaged;
- recommended funding formulas for career guidance and drop-out prevention and intervention systems and a plan for phasing the formulas into the program of basic education beginning in the 2011-2013 biennium; and
- a plan for phasing in, beginning in the 2011-2013 biennium, the expansion of the current school improvement planning program to include state-funded technical assistance for districts in significant need of improvement regarding high school graduation rates.

By December 1, 2010 new recommendations from the work group are due to the Legislature and the Governor regarding a state-level and regional infrastructure for coordinating services for vulnerable youth. These recommendations must address:

- whether to adopt an official conceptual framework for all entities that can support coordinated planning and evaluation;
- creation of a performance-based management system;
- development of regional and county multi-partner youth consortia to assist in building comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and re-engagement systems;
- development of a school-based one-stop shop to provide individualized attention, establish protocols for coordinating data and services, and build a system of single case managers across agencies;
- launching a statewide media campaign; and
- development of a statewide database of available services for vulnerable youth.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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