

RCW 28A.300.139 Washington integrated student supports protocol.

(1) The Washington integrated student supports protocol is established. The protocol shall be developed by the center for the improvement of student learning, established in RCW 28A.300.130, based on the framework described in this section. The purposes of the protocol include:

(a) Supporting a school-based approach to promoting the success of all students by coordinating academic and nonacademic supports to reduce barriers to academic achievement and educational attainment;

(b) Fulfilling a vision of public education where educators focus on education, students focus on learning, and auxiliary supports enable teaching and learning to occur unimpeded;

(c) Encouraging the creation, expansion, and quality improvement of community-based supports that can be integrated into the academic environment of schools and school districts;

(d) Increasing public awareness of the evidence showing that academic outcomes are a result of both academic and nonacademic factors; and

(e) Supporting statewide and local organizations in their efforts to provide leadership, coordination, technical assistance, professional development, and advocacy to implement high quality, evidence-based, student-centered, coordinated approaches throughout the state.

(2)(a) The Washington integrated student supports protocol must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to the unique needs of schools and districts across the state, yet sufficiently structured to provide all students with the individual support they need for academic success.

(b) The essential framework of the Washington integrated student supports protocol includes:

(i) Needs assessments: A system-level needs assessment with resource mapping must be conducted in order to identify academic and nonacademic supports that are currently available or lacking in schools, school districts, and the community. A student-level needs assessment must be conducted for all at-risk students in order to develop or identify the needed academic and nonacademic supports within the students' school and community. These supports must be coordinated to provide students with a package of mutually reinforcing supports designed to meet the individual needs of each student.

(ii) Integration and coordination: The school and district leadership and staff must establish clear, cooperative policies and procedures with community-based and other out-of-school providers of academic and nonacademic supports to enhance the effectiveness of the protocol.

(iii) Community partnerships: Community partners must be engaged to provide academic, nonacademic, and social-emotional supports to reduce barriers to students' academic success, including supports to students' families.

(iv) Data driven: Students' needs and outcomes must be tracked over time to determine student progress and evolving needs.

(c) The framework must facilitate the ability of any academic or nonacademic provider to support the needs of at-risk students, including, but not limited to: Out-of-school providers, social workers, mental health counselors, physicians, dentists, speech therapists, and audiologists. [2021 c 111 s 4; 2016 c 72 s 801.]

Finding—Intent—2021 c 111: "(1) The legislature acknowledges that the learning assistance program was developed to provide supplemental instruction and services for public school students who are not meeting academic standards. Initially, school districts were allowed to use learning assistance program funds in a flexible manner to support students participating in the program. Over time, the legislature restricted, and established priorities for, the use of learning assistance program funds. The legislature finds that it is time to restore flexibility to the use of learning assistance program funds; however, local control must be balanced with accountability for improvement in the academic achievement of students participating in the program.

(2) (a) The legislature expects that the learning assistance program will continue to be used to fund supplemental instruction and service to eligible students who are not meeting academic standards.

(b) However, the legislature intends to immediately remove restrictions on the use of learning assistance program funds so that school districts can flexibly use these funds to identify and address the academic and nonacademic needs of students resulting from and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Removal of the restrictions does not mean that learning assistance programs cannot continue to use the best practices and strategies included on the state menus or the services and activities listed in RCW 28A.165.035, as repealed by this act.

(3) (a) Beginning September 1, 2025, or following the end of the state of emergency declared by the governor due to COVID-19, whichever is later, the legislature intends to continue the flexible use of learning assistance program funds but require that budgeting and expenditure of these funds occur through the framework of the Washington integrated student supports protocol, established by the legislature in 2016.

(b) To ease the transition, the legislature recommends that school district boards of directors begin budgeting and expending learning assistance program funds using the Washington integrated student supports protocol as soon as possible.

(c) Under the protocol, before engaging in the process of budgeting and expending learning assistance program funds, the legislature expects school district boards of directors to perform needs assessments and use data to map the resources of the school district, each school, and the community. School boards are expected to identify gaps in the coordination and integration of academic and nonacademic supports and to engage community partners in strategic planning that prioritizes the needs of students. Each school in the district is also expected to use needs assessments and data to determine how to best engage community partners to address the academic and nonacademic needs of its students in an integrated and coordinated manner. Finally, the legislature expects that schools and school districts will use data in an iterative process to drive decisions about how learning assistance program funds continue to be used, and to determine whether decisions about the use of program funds resulted in improvement in students' academic achievement."
[2021 c 111 s 1.]

Effective date—2021 c 111: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or

support of the state government and its existing public institutions,
and takes effect immediately [April 21, 2021]." [2021 c 111 s 17.]

Finding—Intent—2016 c 72: See note following RCW 28A.600.015.