PSSB 5841
Hansen
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Effect
• Removes the requirement that students complete a state or federal financial aid application as an element of their high school and beyond plan.
• Directs that the universal high school and beyond plan platform must import financial aid application data maintained by the Washington student achievement council to provide an easy way for authorized persons to view the student's progress on financial aid applications.

AN ACT Relating to the completion of postsecondary financial aid applications; and amending RCW 28A.230.215.

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

Sec. 1. RCW 28A.230.215 and 2023 c 271 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The legislature finds that fully realizing the potential of high school and beyond plans as meaningful tools for articulating and revising pathways for graduation will require additional school counselors and family coordinators. The legislature further finds that the development and implementation of an online electronic platform for high school and beyond plans will be an appropriate and supportive action that will assist students, parents and guardians, educators, school counselors, and other staff who support students' career and college preparation as the legislature explores options for funding additional school counselors.

(2) Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, each school district must ensure that an electronic high school and beyond plan platform is available to all students who are required to have a high school and beyond plan.

(3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall facilitate the transition to a universal online high school and

beyond plan platform that will ensure consistent and equitable access to the needed information and support to guide students' educational experience and ensure preparation for their postsecondary plans.

(a) By January 1, 2024, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must develop a preliminary list of existing vendors who can provide or build a platform that meets the criteria outlined in subsection (4) of this section and that supports the high school and beyond plan elements identified in RCW 28A.230.212 and has the capabilities to support the new elements identified in section 5, chapter 271, Laws of 2023. The office of the superintendent of public instruction must submit the list of existing vendors and estimated costs associated with statewide implementation of the universal platform to the governor and the education policy and fiscal committees of the legislature.

(b) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must select the vendor that will be responsible for developing the universal platform by June 1, 2024.

(c) By October 1, 2024, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must develop an implementation plan including 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 professional development that may be needed, for completing full statewide implementation of the universal platform in all school districts. In the implementation plan, the office of the superintendent of public instruction may include a cost alternative for educational service districts to host the universal platform for school districts of the second class when such a district does not have sufficient technology resources to implement and maintain the universal platform.

(4)(a) In addition to the requirements outlined in RCW 28A.230.212, the universal platform must have the capability to be routinely updated and modified in order to include the following elements and capabilities to ensure equity in high school and beyond plans implementation and engagement across the state that:

(i) Enable students to create, personalize, and revise their high school and beyond plan;

(ii) Comply with all necessary state and federal requirements for student privacy and allow for students to opt in or opt out of

portions of the universal platform related to third-party information sharing;

(iii) Use technology that can quickly be adapted to include future statutory changes, administrative changes, or both, as well as integrate enhancements to improve the features and functionality;

(iv) Facilitate the automatic import of academic course, credit, and grade data at a regular interval from the most commonly used district student information system platforms and manual import from less commonly used systems so that students' progress towards graduation in the high school ((~~[and]~~)) and beyond plan is accurately reflected at any given time;

(v) Allow for translation into the most common non-English languages across the state in accordance with the model language access policy and procedures as required under chapter 28A.183 RCW;

(vi) Include multiple and varied in-platform assessments with viewable results that can inform career and postsecondary goals including, but not limited to, personality, learning styles, interests, aptitudes, and skills assessments;

(vii) Include a catalog containing meaningful, high quality career exploration opportunities and resources beyond the traditional college, career, and aptitude assessments that are submitted by approved entities (community organizations, institutions of higher education that are authorized to participate in state financial aid programs under chapter 28B.92 RCW, and employers) and vetted by state-selected approvers that allow students to register for or apply to participate in the opportunities (programs, classes, internships, preapprenticeships, online courses, etc.) or access the resources. The universal platform should use completion data from these opportunities to make recommendations to students to include in their high school ((~~[and]~~)) and beyond plans;

(viii) ((~~A~~)) Provide a dedicated space in which to build a direct connection to potential employers, including industry associations, trade associations, labor unions, service branches of the military, nonprofit organizations, and other state and local community organizations so students can learn from experts in different occupational fields about career opportunities and any necessary education and training requirements;

(ix) ((~~A~~)) Provide a secure space for staff, parents or guardians, and approved community partners who support students' academic progress and career and college preparation, to make notes

that can inform staff efforts to connect students to academic and career connected learning opportunities and develop support and credit recovery plans for students, as needed;

(x) ((~~Accessibility~~)) Allow for accessibility options for students needing accommodations including, but not limited to, visual aids and voice dictation for students with limited literacy skills;

(xi) ((~~Indefinite~~)) Provide indefinite access for students to their high school ((~~[and]~~)) and beyond plan, regardless of current school affiliation or lack thereof, in both mobile and desktop applications, that includes the capability to download and print their plan in one document, without requiring students to access multiple screens;

(xii) ((~~Inclusion of~~)) Use in-state labor market, apprenticeship, and postsecondary education performance data, including employment and earning outcomes, certificate and degree completion outcomes, and demographics of enrolled students or employees, to inform students' exploration and consideration of postsecondary options;

(xiii) ((~~A~~)) Has a dedicated space where students can store additional evidence of their learning and postsecondary preparation, such as videos, essays, art, awards and recognitions, screencasts, letters of recommendation, industry certifications, microcredentials or other mastery-based learning recognitions, and work-integrated learning experiences. The universal platform should include the ability for students and staff to provide access to this portfolio in its entirety or in selected parts to relevant third parties, including institutions of higher education that are authorized to participate in state financial aid programs under chapter 28B.92 RCW, branches of the military, potential employers, or preapprenticeship opportunities;

(xiv) ((~~Access~~)) Allow access to data reporting features that allow schools, districts, and state agencies to review data stored within the universal platform, and allow data to be broken down by demographic, socioeconomic, and other identified characteristics, for the purposes of analyzing student use of the universal platform, improving student access to the information, guidance, and opportunities that can help them maximize their secondary education experience and postsecondary preparation, and informing state-level support for high school and beyond plan implementation;

(xv) ((~~A~~)) Provide a space for the student to indicate the graduation pathway option or options the student has selected to

complete and how the selected option or options align with the student's career and postsecondary education goals; ((~~and~~))

(xvi) ((~~The~~)) Has the ability for school districts to customize or add features unique to local needs and local graduation requirements, including the capability to auto-align data with the local school districts' graduation requirements or the ability to enter those requirements manually; and

(xvii) Import financial aid application data maintained by the Washington student achievement council to provide an easily accessible way for students, parents, and authorized school staff to view the student's progress and completion status of state and federal financial aid applications.

(b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must also ensure that the universal platform will permit transition plans required by RCW 28A.155.220 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 nonelectronic formats.

(5)(a) Within two years of completing the universal platform development and alignment with the requirements in this section and RCW 28A.230.212, school districts must provide students with access to the adopted universal platform.

(b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must develop guidance and provide technical assistance and support for the facilitation of statewide professional development for school districts and partner organizations in using the universal platform.

(6) In carrying out subsections (3)(b) and (4) of this section, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall seek input from the state board of education, educators, school and district administrators, school counselors, career counseling specialists, families, students, the Washington student achievement council, institutions of higher education that are authorized to participate in state financial aid programs under chapter 28B.92 RCW, and community partners who support students' career and college preparation. The office of the superintendent of public instruction may partner with existing community and regional networks and organizations who support students' career and college preparation in the analysis, selection, and implementation of the universal platform.

(7) As used in this section "universal platform" means the universal online high school and beyond plan platform.

(8) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may adopt and revise rules as necessary to implement this section.

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