
**Early Learning & Children's
Services Committee**

HB 2322

Brief Description: Increasing access to full-day kindergarten programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler and Appleton.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a community kindergarten grant program to increase access to full-day kindergarten in communities where full-day kindergarten is not available through resident schools.

Hearing Date: 2/27/07

Staff: Chris Alejano (786-7115).

Background:

School districts can offer full-day kindergarten programs, but the state's basic education funding model allocates monies for kindergarten students only for 180 half-days of instruction. Districts offering full-day programs can supplement their basic education monies with local dollars, student achievement funds, tuition payments, or other resources.

However, since school districts voluntarily offer full-day kindergarten programs, not all students have access to them. Furthermore, the compulsory school attendance and admission statute requires only parents with children eight years of age and under eighteen years of age to attend school, making school for families with children under the age of eight voluntary. According to a 2004 survey by the Economic Opportunity Institute, 43 percent of districts in Washington state offered full-day kindergarten programs based on a total of 138 districts that reported (or 46.6 percent of the total 296 districts in the state).

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, community kindergarten grants are made available for licensed facilities that provide child care and early learning service's outside a child's home to operate full-day kindergarten programs in communities where full-day kindergarten is not available to all children through their resident schools.

Licensed agencies receiving community kindergarten grant funding must:

1. provide an instructional program of at least 1,000 hours;
2. establish learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity;
3. demonstrate strong connections with other early learning providers;
4. participate in early learning readiness activities; and
5. provide a curriculum that assists students in acquiring academic, communication, social, and emotional skills.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 2007.

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