

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1510

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to the assessment of students in state-funded full- day kindergarten classrooms.

Brief Description: Regarding an assessment of students in state-funded full-day kindergarten classrooms.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Maxwell and Kelley; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/3/11, 2/17/11 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires school districts receiving all-day kindergarten support to agree to utilize a kindergarten assessment specified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Allows parents and guardians to excuse their students from participating in the assessment.
- Provides for a fairness and bias review of the assessment before it is implemented.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Billig, Finn, Haigh, Hunt, Ladenburg, Lias, Maxwell, McCoy and Probst.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Angel, Dahlquist, Fagan, Hargrove, Klippert, Kretz and Wilcox.

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.

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

School districts receiving all-day kindergarten support must agree to:

- provide at least 1,000 hours of instructional program;
- provide a curriculum that offers a rich, varied set of experiences that assist students in:
 1. developing a variety of communication skills;
 2. learning science, social studies, arts, health and physical education, and a world language other than English;
 3. acquiring large and small motor skills;
 4. acquiring social and emotional skills including successful participation in learning activities as an individual and as part of a group; and
 5. learning through hands-on experiences;
- provide learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity;
- demonstrate strong connections and communication with early learning providers; and
- participate in kindergarten program readiness activities with early learning providers and parents.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A new condition is added for receipt of all-day kindergarten funding. Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, school districts receiving all-day kindergarten support must also agree to identify the skills, knowledge, and characteristics of kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year. The schools must utilize a kindergarten assessment process specified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) and report the results to the Superintendent. Parents and guardians may excuse their students from participating in the assessment.

The assessment is to be known as the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills. The purposes of this assessment are as follows:

- to support social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and development;
- to support early learning provider and parent involvement; and
- to inform instruction to meet the needs of individual students.

There must be a fairness and bias review of the assessment before it is implemented.

The Superintendent is required to make the assessment process available on a voluntary basis at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Additional provisions are added in the substitute bill, as follows:

1. Parents and guardians may excuse their students from participating in the assessment.
 2. The assessment is named the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills.
 3. The purposes of this assessment are spelled out:
 - to support social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and development;
 - to support early learning provider and parent involvement; and
 - to inform instruction.
 4. There must be a fairness and bias review of the assessment before it is implemented.
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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 17, 2011.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2011.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The response of parents and teachers to the pilot led to this bill moving forward. This provides a very important way of assessing the skills of children coming in to kindergarten. A kindergarten assessment such as this provides teachers the knowledge they need about the students coming into the classroom. It also fosters the creation of relationships that assist students and their families in making the transition to kindergarten. Students will not experience the feeling of being left with strangers when they enter kindergarten, since the students will already have met the teacher and the whole transition will be smoothed.

This will also allow for identification of those preschool programs that work and those that do not. The assessment develops partnerships and fosters collaboration between the kindergarten and preschool teachers and the students' families. When children are in kindergarten they have a bright light for learning that should be fostered. The assessment provides opportunity and can help eradicate racial disproportionality. Teacher visits can be very powerful.

This involves three parts, all of which are important: (1) an evaluation in the first few weeks; (2) parent collaboration; and (3) early learning collaboration. At this point, there is not a way to do a statewide evaluation but that would be possible with this bill. An early evaluation provides valuable information to the teacher about the student's strengths and also where the student may need extra assistance. In one case, an early evaluation showed that the child did not need an individualized education program any longer and, thus, saved the district money.

Making connections between early learning providers and kindergarten teachers can shape the entire K-12 experience for a child. It also provides valuable feedback to the early learning provider about strengths and weaknesses of the assessment. Putting this process in place early can eliminate the preparation gap. It can also save money by making later remediation efforts unnecessary. A holistic approach such as this is good.

It is not enough to just go to preschool. There is a role for diagnostic tools. There is often a divide between those who can afford to send their children to a quality preschool and those who cannot. A divide opens early between these children. An early assessment provides valuable, early information about each child. Chronological awareness is critical. Students with dyslexia learn differently, so information must be presented differently. Having information about different learning styles from the outset can make all of the difference in making each child successful. Students will not fall through the cracks and end up costing the system a lot of money. This will create a level playing field of readiness and allow seamless transitions. Kindergarten is the foundation for life. Just like the transition from elementary to middle school, the transition from preschool to kindergarten is extremely important.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kagi, prime sponsor; Hannah Lidman, League of Education Voters; Janet Levinger; Sebrena Burr; April Ritter; Sue Winn, Family Childcare Association; Kevin Washington, Tabor 100; Ramona Hattendorf, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Lyne Gilliland and Sherine Tully, Read On and Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Jeanne Tweten; Ryan Pricco, Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network; and Debra Hughes.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.