

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2799

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to authorizing a five-year pilot project for up to six collaborative schools for innovation and success operated by school districts in partnership with colleges of education.

Brief Description: Authorizing a five-year pilot project for up to six collaborative schools for innovation and success operated by school districts in partnership with colleges of education.

Sponsors: Representatives Sullivan, Santos, Maxwell, Darneille, Hunt, Carlyle, Haigh, Pollet and Kenney; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/29/12, 3/2/12 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes a five-year Collaborative Schools for Innovation and Success (CSIS) Pilot Project where colleges of education and school districts select a low-performing elementary school and implement models of instruction and educator preparation.
- Establishes a process for an application of intent; selection of up to six CSIS Pilot Projects, specifically including the two largest school districts in eastern and western Washington; and development of a comprehensive Innovation and Success Plan for each school.
- Provides for the allocation of planning and implementation grants, subject to appropriated funds, for three of the CSIS Pilot Projects, but authorizes the other three to participate without state funding.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Ahern, Billig, Fagan, Finn, Haigh, Hunt, Maxwell, McCoy, Parker, Probst 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.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Dahlquist, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Hargrove, Klippert, Ladenburg and Liias.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Educator Certification. Educator certification programs must be approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and may be offered by institutions of higher education or other entities. There are teacher certification programs at each of the six public four-year institutions of higher education in Washington, as well as 13 independent institutions. Institutions offer initial or residency certification concurrently with a bachelor's degree, as a certificate-only option, or through Master's in Teaching programs. Six institutions also offer alternative routes to teacher certification which are partnerships between the institution, school districts, and other entities. These are designed for school paraprofessionals to become teachers, or for individuals with bachelor's degrees and other working experience to change careers.

Several national organizations, including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, have advocated for an approach to teacher preparation modeled after clinical residency and internship programs used in medical professions. Professional Development Schools are close collaborations between a college of education and a K-12 school where a cohort of teacher candidates is trained on-site, working with mentor teachers and college faculty to form a professional learning community at the school. Some large urban school districts, including Boston and Chicago, have targeted this model at high-needs schools as a way simultaneously to recruit and develop teachers with the background and skills to serve those schools, and to implement research-based strategies for school improvement.

Waivers. The State Board of Education (SBE) may grant waivers of some statutory program requirements of Basic Education, including minimum instructional hours, the length of the school year, and student-teacher ratios, if the waivers are necessary to implement a school improvement or restructuring plan, or to implement an Innovation School or Innovation Zone approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). The SPI is also authorized to grant waivers of administrative rules under these circumstances.

There are no statutory processes for waiving requirements regarding educator certification programs. However, most of these requirements are established by the PESB in administrative rules rather than in statute.

Required Action Framework. Legislation enacted in 2010 established a process for identifying and designating certain low-performing schools to receive federal school improvement grants. The process includes a comprehensive academic performance audit with specified elements and development of a Required Action Plan. If necessary to implement a Required Action Plan, the school district and employee organizations must reopen collective bargaining agreements. In the event the school district and employee organizations are unable to agree, a process is outlined involving first an appointed mediator, and then consideration of disputed issues by the superior court.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Collaborative Schools for Innovation and Success (CSIS) Pilot Project is established.

The purpose is for colleges of education and school districts to develop and implement:

- research-based models of instruction proven to close the opportunity gap and improve student learning in low-performing schools; and
- research-based models of educator preparation and professional development proven to build an educator workforce with the knowledge, skills, and background to serve students in low-performing schools.

A college of education is defined as an institution of higher education in Washington with educator preparation and certification programs approved by the PESB.

The two school districts in western and eastern Washington with the largest number of enrolled students may each enter an agreement with a college of education to participate in the CSIS Pilot Project. Any other school district may enter an agreement with a college of education and submit an application to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the PESB to participate. The college and district must select an elementary school to be the CSIS school. The school must be among the lowest-achieving schools in the district as measured by district, state, or federal criteria, including criteria measuring the educational opportunity gap, and must not have previously received grant funds for school improvement.

Colleges and districts must submit a joint application of intent to the OSPI and the PESB by July 1, 2012. The required content of the application is specified. The OSPI and the PESB must approve the two western and eastern Washington applications, but may comment and make suggestions for improvement. By August 1, 2012, the OSPI and the PESB select up to four additional applications. Subject to funding, the OSPI allocates planning and implementation grants to the two western and eastern Washington applications, plus one of the additional selected applicants. The remaining selected applicants may participate in the CSIS Pilot Project, but without state funding.

After an application of intent is approved, the college and district conduct a comprehensive needs assessment using disaggregated student data that includes the elements of an academic performance audit. Based on the needs assessment, an Innovation and Success Plan (Plan) is developed in collaboration with school staff, parents, and community members. A Plan must include:

- the proposed program for instruction, wraparound services, resource deployment, and professional development;
- a family and community engagement strategy;
- professional learning communities among school staff and higher education faculty;
- intensive preparation of teacher and principal candidates using research-based practices, and a particular focus on cultural competency and development of skills to serve students with special learning needs;
- identification of private and community partners;

- identification of the metrics to be used to assess student achievement and educator skill development in the school, and specific improvement goals for the term of the pilot project;
- any waivers to be requested from the SBE, the OSPI, or the PESB;
- identification and completion of any modifications to collective bargaining agreements necessary to implement the Plan, using the statutory process established under the Required Action Framework; and
- a project budget.

Each CSIS Pilot Project must submit a completed Plan to the OSPI and the PESB by March 15, 2013. The OSPI and the PESB must provide notification of whether a Plan is approved by May 1, 2013. If a Plan is not approved, the college and district have 30 days to revise and resubmit their Plan. Waiver authority of the SBE and the OSPI is extended to include waivers necessary to implement a Plan, and waiver authority is established for the PESB for this purpose.

Approved Plans are implemented over five years, beginning in the 2013-14 school year through the 2017-18 school year.

Each CSIS Pilot Project must submit an annual progress report by December 1 that describes best practices, lessons learned, adjustments planned and implemented, and suggestions for expanding the use of best practices to a larger scale. The OSPI and the PESB compile and summarize the reports and forward them to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature.

Subject to funding, the OSPI must contract with a northwest educational research organization for an outcomes evaluation of the CSIS Pilot Project. An interim evaluation is due December 1, 2015, with a final evaluation due September 1, 2018. The OSPI and the PESB must recommend by December 1, 2018, whether to modify, continue, or expand the CSIS Pilot Project.

The CSIS Pilot Project is repealed June 30, 2019.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The PESB is authorized to grant waivers if necessary to implement an approved CSIS Pilot Project. The needs assessment must use disaggregated student data. The Plan for intensive educator preparation must include a focus on cultural competency. A reference to the achievement gap is corrected.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Many individuals have been involved in education reform efforts in recent years. Bills have been introduced to support and encourage schools to do things differently. This bill provides an additional tool in that effort by involving the colleges of education directly in providing additional opportunities for students. There are struggling schools that are doing amazing things with state and federal resources. The goal here is to have a different focus, as a pilot project, and see how struggling schools respond to an intensive partnership with a college.

The Governor has spent a great deal of time working on this proposal. The key concept is establishing creative partnerships between institutions of higher education and school districts. By bringing the college into the day-to-day operations of a school, student achievement will be accelerated along with the intensive preparation of new educators and the knowledge and skills of current staff. The concerns that were expressed in earlier proposals have been addressed by expanding participation to public and independent institutions, and expanding the range of eligible schools and districts.

Excellent residency training programs, including Washington's alternative route programs, focus on ensuring that the presence of higher education faculty, interns, and teacher mentors positively impact the school building as a whole. Clinical models bring the latest research and best practices to teacher candidates and veteran teachers at the same time. There is substantial research supporting this model of preparation, including examples in Washington. The research aspects of the bill are very supported. This bill includes many strategies that the SPI has supported over the years and have proven to be important in improving student achievement, including using research and evidence-based practices, family and community engagement, and providing a specific link to higher education. It will be exciting to see if this CSIS Pilot Project actually moves the needle in addressing the opportunity gap.

The independent colleges of education prepare 35 percent of the teachers, principals, and counselors in the state, with an even high proportion of math and science teachers. This is a great step to establish additional partnerships with a priority on collaboration, innovation, success, and improving student achievement. The independent colleges have a lot to add and appreciate the competitive nature of the proposal. It is exciting for principals to be able to lead a building with so much emphasis on skill development in new and veteran teachers, especially in a struggling school. Earlier versions would have permitted middle and high schools to participate, which would have been preferable. The Kent School District is one of the most diverse in the state, and there are amazing things going on in the schools to address the opportunity gap. Pilot projects like this, accompanied by research, are needed to identify what practices are most successful and get those stories out to the broader community and other schools. It is good to see the emphasis in the bill on involving the community. This is absolutely necessary for success.

It is appreciated that the PESB is an integral part of the approval and oversight process, because they are a board made up of active practitioners, both from K-12 and the colleges of education. A concern expressed by some school districts is that the initial timeframe to submit an application is a little short, but the tradeoff is that the needs assessment and planning period are almost a full year. Experience has shown that time is needed to develop

a high quality plan. Funding support will be very important. The University of Washington sees this as an extension of other efforts that are already underway to bring academic research into the school to improve both student learning and educator preparation. To make meaningful change takes a strong commitment and a willingness to do things differently and adapt. For this effort to be successful, there should also be additional flexibility and streamlining of processes.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Sullivan, prime sponsor; Judy Hartmann, Office of the Governor; Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educator Standards Board; Shawn Lewis, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Violet Boyer, Independent Colleges of Washington; Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals; Ben Ibali, Eliminating Opportunity Gap Committee; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; and Margaret Shepherd, University of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.