
Education Committee

HB 2317

Brief Description: Promoting expanded learning opportunities as a strategy to close the educational opportunity gap and prevent summer learning loss.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, S. Hunt, Magendanz, Orwall, Fagan, Ormsby, Kagi, Morrell, Seaquist and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides a description of Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) and defines a target student population in grades kindergarten through 8 intended to receive them.
- Establishes a Summer ELO Grant Program for schools and community-based organizations to deliver enrichment programs to prevent summer learning loss among the target student population, if funds are appropriated for this purpose.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to contract with a statewide non-profit organization to build capacity for, promote, and sustain an ELO system, if funds are appropriated for this purpose.

Hearing Date: 1/30/14

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The term "Expanded Learning Opportunities" (ELOs) is used to describe afterschool and summer learning opportunities provided outside the regular school day or year and delivered through partnerships between schools and community-based organizations (CBOs). The ELOs typically supplement academic learning with enrichment and youth-development activities. There is a body of research literature from a federally-funded initiative called 21st Century Community Learning Centers that suggests that the ELOs provided for low-income and other at-risk students can be an effective strategy for closing the educational opportunity gap and reducing summer learning loss.

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.

Research indicates that most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months. Low-income students also lose more than two months in reading achievement. According to a study by Johns Hopkins University, this learning gap widens over time, so that by ninth grade, summer learning accounts for two-thirds of the gap in reading between low-income students and their middle-income peers. The same students most affected by summer learning loss were also more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to attend college.

Summary of Bill:

The ELOs are described as having the following characteristics:

- offer structured, intentional, creative learning environments outside the traditional school day;
- build linkages with schools to align in-school and out-of-school learning;
- are coordinated with schools to create enriching experiences that complement classroom instruction;
- are provided by the CBOs;
- provide a range of culturally responsive enrichment and learning activities; and
- focus on an array of academic and nonacademic areas.

The target student population for the ELOs is students in grades kindergarten through 8 who:

- consistently perform below grade level and are not meeting standards on state assessments;
- exhibit high absenteeism, truancy, or discipline referrals;
- attend a chronically underperforming school; or
- are defined as vulnerable students, which includes students who are homeless or in foster care, special education, or the juvenile justice system.

If funds are appropriated for this purpose, a Summer ELO Grant Program is established. The purpose is to build capacity for partnerships between schools and the CBOs to design and deliver evidence-based ELO programs to prevent summer learning loss among the target student population. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) identifies criteria for awarding the grants and must award grants proportionately between school districts or Educational Service Districts and the CBOs. Grant funds may be used for pupil transportation. Grant recipients must collect data, and the OSPI conducts a program evaluation every two years.

If funds are appropriated for this purpose, the OSPI must contract with a statewide non-profit organization to build capacity for, promote, and sustain an ELO system and support the Summer ELO Grant Program. Under the contract, the organization must implement a statewide communications plan and outreach campaign; convene regional networks to develop the ELOs and leverage local and regional resources; provide technical assistance and professional development; and report annually to the OSPI.

The OSPI, in consultation with the contracted organization, must develop guidelines, templates, and frameworks for model school and CBO partnerships to support ELO programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 2014.

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