

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2317

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to promoting expanded learning opportunities as a strategy to close the educational opportunity gap and prevent summer learning loss.

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 History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/30/14, 2/5/14 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute 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 nonprofit organization to build capacity for, promote, and sustain an ELO system, if funds are appropriated for this purpose.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Dahlquist, Ranking Minority Member; Magendanz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Fey, Haigh, Hargrove, Hawkins, Hayes, S. Hunt, Klippert, Lytton, Muri, Orwall, Parker, Pollet, Seaquist and Warnick.

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: 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.

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 grade 9, 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 Substitute 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;
- are English Language Learners;
- 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, the 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.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

English Language Learners are added to the target student population for the ELOs.

Appropriation: None.

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) One of the Quality Education Council's recommendations is the importance of preventing summer learning loss. Statistics show that students who are already behind fall even further behind every summer, and the rates are higher for low-income children. The ELO system is probably the least expensive way to keep students moving forward because it involves combining resources with community-based organizations. It is not possible to level the playing field without doing things differently.

"Feed Your Brain" is a six-week summer camp focused on environmental education and improving reading skills. This is exactly the type of program that should be supported. It gets kids excited and ready to learn in the fall. One of the main contributors to summer learning loss is lack of access to enrichment and academic activities outside the school environment. The inclusion of funding for transportation is appreciated. English Language Learner students should be added to the target student population.

Communities of color continually express concern that there is not enough opportunity during the traditional school year for their children to get caught up. They continually miss important content when they are pulled out of class for remediation. Having additional

opportunities to learn outside the school day will help address the opportunity gap. All students can learn, but not in the same amount of time or in the same way. That is why out-of-school learning opportunities are so important. It is also important to collaborate with parents and students together. Programs should be data-driven and accessible to any student not meeting standards.

The world has changed, and in order for students to have opportunities to enter well-paying positions, they are all going to have to meet minimum standards that include achieving a high school diploma. In order to be successful, these programs must include not only volunteers but also qualified teachers. There must be engagement in academic activities. The ELO programs provide mentoring and access to technology that is not available to students at home. The only way to change the learning trajectory is to add opportunities for learning outside the school day. If three or four students in a class are so far behind that the instruction is not accessible to them, it sabotages the learning opportunity for all students in the class. During the school year, there is a lot of direct instruction from school staff, and there is opportunity for pure discovery after school. These programs provide both types of opportunity through guided discovery. Adults help students dive deeper into the material, explore their interests, and provide access to rich information.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; Nola Renz, United Way of Pierce County; Lynn Tucker and Virginia Eader, Schools Out Washington; Julia Suliman, State Board of Education; Alex Hur, Equity in Education Coalition; Jan Link, Larry Wewel, and Karyssa Mathison, Academic Link Outreach; Tara Herron, Youth and Family Link; and Peter Brickey, Youth and Family Link and 21st Century Schools Program.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.