

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1162

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to social emotional learning in public schools.

Brief Description: Providing for social emotional learning in public schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Quall, Sullivan, Haigh, Orwall, Liias, Takko, Kagi, Green, Simpson, Kenney and Nelson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/20/09, 2/10/09 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a Social Emotional Learning Public-Private Partnership Account (Account) to receive any monies appropriated by the Legislature and from other sources.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, if funds are available in the Account, to promote and encourage incorporation of Social Emotional Learning into basic education instruction in public schools.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cox, Dammeier, Hunt, Liias, Maxwell, Orwall and Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383)

Background:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is responsible for developing learning standards or Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) that describe the knowledge and skills all public school students are expected to know and be able to do, based

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on the Basic Education Goals established in state law. There are EALRs for reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, health and fitness, communication, and the arts. Legislation enacted in 2007 also directed development of EALRs for technology, which were completed in December of 2008. The EALRs have been made more specific for each grade level through the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs), also developed by the SPI. For some EALRs, student performance is measured by the Washington Assessment of Student Learning; for others, it is measured through classroom-based assessments.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a term used to describe knowledge and skills in awareness and management of emotions, setting and achieving personal and academic goals, interpersonal skills, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and demonstrating decision-making and responsible behavior. In Washington there are references to some of these skills in the GLEs for health and fitness, such as "understands positive and negative effects of stress and stress management techniques" or "solves conflicts while maintaining safe and respectful relationships." Some other states, including Wisconsin, Ohio, Tennessee, and Illinois, have adopted separate the SEL standards. In Illinois all school districts are required to adopt a policy for incorporating the SEL into their educational program.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

An SEL is defined as age-appropriate behavioral and emotional management, relationship skills, conflict resolution, interpersonal communication, cooperation, decision-making, and planning.

An SEL Public-Private Partnership Account (Account) is created in the custody of the State Treasurer to support the activities of the SPI and school districts in support of the SEL. Revenues in the Account include any appropriations by the Legislature, gifts or grants, federal funds, or other sources. Only the SPI or designee may authorize expenditures.

To the extent funds are available in the Account, the SPI promotes and encourages incorporation of the SEL into basic education instruction in public schools. Activities could include:

- disseminating information about research-based curricula and model programs;
- providing guidelines for school districts;
- referring districts to high-quality professional development; and
- providing grants to school districts.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The original bill established a SEL Public-Private Partnership (Partnership) composed of 12 members, with the goal of supporting and providing leadership for the incorporation of the SEL into basic education instruction in the public schools. The Partnership and the SPI were assigned various responsibilities, including developing state learning standards in the SEL for statewide adoption by September 1, 2012. If funds were available and equally matched from private sources in the Account, the Partnership and the SPI would oversee grants for up to

three school districts to implement a model program of the SEL instruction, including research-based curriculum, professional development, and classroom based assessment.

The substitute bill retains the Account but does not establish the Partnership or assign responsibilities. No private match is required for expenditure from the Account. If funds are in the Account, the SPI promotes and encourages incorporation of the SEL into basic education instruction, including disseminating information and awarding grants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on 2/10/2009.

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) The goal is to establish a public-private partnership to help take the first steps in establishing the SEL for Washington. The initiative can be started on a pilot basis in three school districts so that we can learn from that experience before taking the initiative statewide. In the long run, the SEL instruction should be brought under the umbrella of Basic Education. There is broad support for the concept. In the meantime, there are small things that can be done with limited resources.

This presents a significant opportunity to address a pressing issue. For each child to learn to his or her potential, there are different domains of knowledge and skills. The SEL encompasses deliberate teaching of certain skills as well as creation of a positive learning environment and a school climate that supports those skills. This is not "one more thing" to teach; the SEL provides an organizing framework for other knowledge and skills and provides a foundation for learning. It is the glue that holds the other learning together. Students cannot have academic success without basic SEL skills of self awareness, confidence, and decision-making. There are characteristics of high-quality programs that teach these things through sequenced development skill sets and active instruction. A major meta-analysis of research indicated that the SEL programming positively affects other student outcomes in terms of attitudes, conduct, attendance, and academic performance.

(With concerns) Although this is a good idea, before it and similar good ideas can be considered, the Legislature must fully fund Basic Education. Until then, good ideas are just another unfunded mandate on the school system.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Dickerson, prime sponsor; Dr. Sheryl Harmer, Consultant on Social Emotional Learning; Ronald Rabin, Kirilin Charitable Foundation; Dr. David Hawkins, University of Washington Social Development Research

Group; and Seth Dawson, Washington Association for Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention.

(With concerns) Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.