

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1162

As Passed House:
February 13, 2010

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

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

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Dickerson, Quall, Sullivan, Haigh, Orwall, Lias, Takko, Kagi, Green, Simpson, Kenney and Nelson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

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

Education Appropriations: 2/25/09, 2/4/10 [DP2S(w/o sub ED)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/10, 59-35.

Brief Summary of Second 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; Maxwell, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cox, Dammeier, Hunt, Lias, Orwall, Probst and Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

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.

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Education. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Hunter, Kagi, Maxwell, Quall and Rolfes.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Anderson, Haler and Nealey.

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349).

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 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 Second Substitute Bill:

The 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education):

(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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education Appropriations):

(In support) The general fund cost of this bill is zero. The Society for Research in Children's Development indicates that SEL programs can improve student achievement, reduce need for social services, and leave fewer children in the juvenile justice system. Savings will come to the state in a variety of ways due to this bill. The SPI supports this bill. The Achievement Gap Committee also supports this legislation, as well as several Native American tribes. As an example, Washington High School has about 930 students and in 2003 launched a social emotional, positive behavior support program. The results were so positive that the school

has elected to continue the program well after the grant ran out. Teachers greet students at the door, and establish clear expectations of behavior on campus, and there is positive reinforcement for students meeting expectations. Perhaps as a result of the program, 91 percent of students felt safe in the classroom, over 80 percent felt safe on campus, while 97 percent of parents said staff made the school feel safe. The SPI supports this legislation. The state has been focused for the last 20 years and has been focusing on quality instruction, but there is an increasing acknowledgement that an approach addressing the whole child is necessary.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Education): (In support) Representative Dickerson, prime sponsor; Dr. Sheryl Harmer, Consultant on Social Emotional Learning; Ronald Rabin, Kirlin Charitable Foundation; Dr. David Hawkins, University of Washington Social Development Research Group; Seth Dawson, Washington Association for Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention; Tom Edwards, Washington High School; and Robert Harkins, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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

Persons Testifying (Education Appropriations): Representative Dickerson, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Education): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Education Appropriations): None.