

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5620

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 16, 2009

Title: An act relating to a quality rating and improvement system.

Brief Description: Regarding the voluntary rating system for child care centers and early education programs.

Sponsors: Senators Kauffman, Keiser and Ranker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/11/09, 2/16/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair, Early Learning; Oemig, Vice Chair, K-12; King, Ranking Minority Member; Hobbs, Holmquist, Jarrett, McDermott and Roach.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: In 2007 the Legislature directed the Department of Early Learning (DEL), subject to the availability of the amount appropriated, to implement a voluntary quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for licensed child care centers and homes and early education programs.

In the 2007-09 budget, the Legislature provided \$4.75 million for the development and piloting of a statewide QRIS model. Five communities participated: Clark County, Kitsap County, Spokane County, White Center, and East Yakima. Two of the pilot sites, White Center and East Yakima, were coordinated by the private-public partnership Thrive by Five. Pierce County participated in the design phase with private funds. DEL was about to begin the field testing phase when funding was suspended due to budget constraints.

Summary of Bill: Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated, DEL, in collaboration with community and statewide partners, which include the nongovernmental private-public partnership, must implement a unified statewide voluntary QRIS. DEL must report to the Legislature before final implementation of a single statewide system.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This clarifies that there will be one statewide model. While it is important to look at different communities, it is difficult to move forward with different assessment systems. One system will make it easier to take the model to scale. Recognizing that the private-public partnership will work with DEL will make it more likely that we will reach the goals of QRIS, giving parents clear and easy access to information about the quality of child care, supporting improvements across the state in early learning, and decreasing the disparities in access to high quality child care.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kauffman, prime sponsor; Kursten Holabird, SEIU 925; Agda Burchard, Washington Association for the Education of Young Children.