

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1803

As of March 15, 2019

Title: An act relating to increasing the number of school districts that may be authorized to reduce the minimum number of required school days in a school year.

Brief Description: Increasing the number of school districts that may be authorized to reduce the minimum number of required school days in a school year.

Sponsors: Representatives Orcutt and Santos.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/04/19, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/15/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the number of waivers that the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction may grant to small school districts requesting permission to reduce the minimum number of school days required in a school year.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: The state's program of basic education obligates school districts to make their educational program accessible to all students who are at least 5 years of age and less than 21 years of age for a minimum of 180 days per school year. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is authorized to grant three-year renewable waivers from the 180-day school year requirement to districts that propose to operate one or more schools on a flexible calendar for purposes of economy and efficiency.

Each application to waive the 180-day school year requirement must include specific content, including:

- a proposed calendar for the school day and school year that demonstrates how instructional hour requirements will be maintained;
- an explanation and estimate of the economies and efficiencies to be gained from compressing the instructional hours into fewer than 180 days;

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- an explanation of how monetary savings will be redirected to support student learning;
- a summary of comments received at one or more public hearings on the proposal and how concerns will be addressed; and
- an explanation of the impact on students who rely upon nutrition programs, students whose parents work on missed days, and education support staff.

OSPI is limited to issuing waivers to five or fewer districts, and eligible districts may not have more than 500 students. Of the five waivers that may be issued, two must be reserved for districts with fewer than 150 students.

Summary of Bill: OSPI may grant 15 or fewer, rather than five or fewer, waivers to small school districts requesting permission to reduce the minimum number of school days required in a school year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The five school districts that use the current waivers are all located in the 509 area, but there is a school district in Chehalis that would like to be able to use the waiver as well. The waivers allow for a flexible schedule while still maintaining the same instructional hours and graduation requirements. The waivers also provide extra time for professional development each month. Transportation costs would be reduced by 20 percent and substitute teacher costs would decrease, so those funds could be used for other programs like social emotional learning. It is easier to get childcare for a full day once a week, and it would make it easier for sports teams to travel. Twenty-two other states have implemented the four-day week, and it has been successful where used in Washington.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Ed Orcutt, Prime Sponsor; Brandon Pontius, Principal, Pe Ell School.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.