

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5841

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to enhancing student learning opportunities and student achievement.

Brief Description: Enhancing student learning opportunities and achievement.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hobbs, McAuliffe, Rockefeller, Tom, Oemig, Kauffman, Regala, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/22/07, 3/29/07 [DPA];
Appropriations: 3/31/07 [DPA(ED)].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- Expands the goals of the Basic Education Act, including focusing on the educational achievement of students, high expectations for students, and preparation for the responsibilities of civic participation in a pluralistic society.
- Phases-in funding for voluntary all-day kindergarten by providing support for students in schools with the highest poverty levels and directs designation of exemplary programs to provide technical assistance to other districts.
- Creates an English as a Second Language field study and demonstration project.
- Creates the Washington Community Learning Center Program which, subject to funding, provides grants to support afterschool programs.
- Establishes grants to support caution of Career Pathways Programs in high demand fields.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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: Do pass as amended. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Haigh, McDermott, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member and Roach.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The Washington Learns comprehensive education study, chaired by Governor Gregoire, issued final recommendations in November 2006. The Governor proposes implementation of a number of the recommendations regarding enhancing student learning opportunities and achievement through her proposed budget for the 2007-09 biennium and proposed legislation.

Basic Education Act Goals. As currently stated in statute, the goal of the Basic Education Act for Washington's schools is to "provide students with the opportunity to become responsible citizens, to contribute to their own economic well-being and to that of their families and communities, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives." The statute then describes the four student learning goals that form the basis of Washington's learning standards.

Kindergarten. School districts can offer a full-day kindergarten program, but the state's basic education funding model allocates monies for kindergarten students only for 180 half-days of instruction. Districts offering full-day programs can supplement their basic education monies with local dollars, student achievement funds, tuition payments, or other resources.

Special Projects. One of the recommendations of the Washington Learns report was for the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to implement a regional best practices demonstration project for English language learners that coordinates curriculum, assessment, teacher training, and family involvement.

In 2004, the Washington Afterschool Network and School's Out Washington, in collaboration with the SPI, developed a statewide plan called "Afterschool in Washington: A Smart, Strategic Investment." One of the plan's primary recommendations was that the Legislature provide \$5 million to support 50 additional afterschool programs to serve 9,000 at-risk, low-income, and minority children.

The Washington Learns report also recommended support for high school career academies to enable 11th and 12th grade students to focus their studies and training on a particular occupational field. Academies could be supported by public-private partnerships of employers, industry associations, higher education institutions, and school districts.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Basic Education Act Goals. The goals of the Basic Education Act are expanded to include providing students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens and to explore and understand diverse perspectives. The expanded goals also include

developing a public school system that focuses on the educational achievement of all students and includes high expectations for and prepares students to achieve personal and academic success. Knowledge and skills in world history and cultures and personal financial literacy are added to the student learning goals. A fifth student learning goal is added: to understand and be fully prepared to exercise the responsibilities of civic participation in a pluralistic society.

Kindergarten. Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, funding for voluntary all-day kindergarten programs is phased-in beginning with schools with the highest percentages of these students.

School districts receiving all-day kindergarten program support must:

- (1) provide an instructional program of at least 1,000 hours;
- (2) provide a curriculum that assists students in acquiring skills and provides hands-on learning experiences;
- (3) establish learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity;
- (4) demonstrate strong connections with early learning community providers; and
- (5) participate in kindergarten readiness activities.

If funds are provided, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) designates one or more exemplary all-day kindergarten programs as "lighthouse" programs to provide technical assistance to other school districts in the initial stages of implementing all-day kindergarten.

Demonstration Projects.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Project. The goals of the ESL demonstration project are established. The ESL demonstration project uses two strategies: (1) a field study of an ongoing project in schools and districts where Spanish is the predominant other language; and (2) a project that provides professional development and planning time to approximately three large schools with many first languages among the students. The SPI selects the participants for the large school project, and participants must partner with an institution of higher education or professional development provider with expertise in supporting student acquisition of academic English.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) must conduct the field study and gather information from the project schools, as well as review current literature regarding best practices. An interim report on the Institute's findings is due November 1, 2008, with a final report due December 1, 2009. The ESL demonstration project expires September 1, 2010.

Washington Community Learning Center Program. The Washington Community Learning Center Program is established, to be administered by the SPI. To the extent funding is available, the SPI provides grants to any organization that meets the eligibility criteria of the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. Priority must be given to requests that focus on reading and mathematics proficiency for students who attend Title I schools that are not meeting federal school improvement goals, and requests that include free transportation for students. Priority can be given to requests for programs focusing improving mathematics achievement, especially for middle or junior high school students, and requests

that involve multiple schools and organizations. Grant funds can be used for a broad array of out-of-school activities.

Each grant is for a maximum of five years. Recipients must report annually to the SPI, including reporting on how transportation is provided for students. Subject to funding, the SPI may provide grants for training and professional development of center staff. Grant recipients can seek flexibility from the SPI to use a portion of their state transportation allocation to transport students to community learning center programs. The SPI evaluates program outcomes and reports to the Governor and the Legislature with an interim report due November 1, 2008, and a final report due December 1, 2009.

Career Pathways Programs. Subject to funding, the SPI provides grants to support development of Career Pathways Programs in high demand fields, with a portion of the funds administered by an experienced nonprofit health organization to create health care career pathways. Grant recipients partnerships are comprised of high schools, parents, special populations, tech-prep consortia, local workforce development councils, skills panels, apprenticeship councils, and other business and labor organizations.

Grant recipients develop and implement a model curriculum for their selected career pathway. Grant funds are for start-up costs, primarily to develop curriculum and assessments and provide professional development for teachers. Grant funds can also be used to upgrade equipment in the program to meet industry standards.

A Career Pathways Program must:

- (1) integrate core academics (such as reading, writing, and mathematics) and high quality career and technical preparation based on industry standards for that field;
- (2) incorporate secondary and post-secondary elements;
- (3) lead to an industry-recognized credential at the post-secondary level or an Associate or Bachelor's Degree;
- (4) be coherent, sequenced, and articulated to community and technical college courses; and
- (5) emphasize projects and application of knowledge and skills.

Students who are struggling with core academic skills receive supplemental instruction within the program. Grant recipients also develop end-of-program assessments that integrate academic work readiness and technical knowledge and skills. The Legislature's intent is to use these assessments as prototypes for possible future additional alternative assessments to the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. The grant program expires July 1, 2009.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:

The goals of the Basic Education Act are further expanded to include references to students becoming respectful global citizens, exploring and understanding diverse perspectives, and preparing students to achieve personal and academic success. The learning goals are expanded to include world history and cultures and financial literacy. A fifth learning goal is added.

Funding for all-day kindergarten programs supports all students in a school, not just students eligible for free and reduced lunch. If funds are provided, the SPI designates "lighthouse" programs to provide technical assistance to school districts.

Demonstration projects creating four innovative K through 3 foundations programs are removed. An audit of the process for determining eligibility for federal free and reduced price lunch programs is removed. Provisions establishing the special education safety net process and oversight committee in statute are removed.

The Washington Community Learning Center Program is established, subject to funding. Also subject to funding, grants are provided to create Career Pathways Programs in high demand fields.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except section 4, relating to the establishment of the Community Learning Center Program, which takes effect August 1, 2007.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Washington Learns has developed these proposals very carefully, and there are many similarities between the House and Senate proposals. Early learning and all-day kindergarten are critical. It would be wonderful to cover all students, but with limited resources, we need to phase-in starting with low-income students. Within the same amount of funding, more low-income students can be served. The goal of the ESL projects is to guide teacher preparation and professional development with a focus on helping students gain academic English skills. Although the Governor requested 10 K through 3 foundations projects, these are scalable. The important piece is to link initiatives that strengthen instruction in early learning, all-day kindergarten, and primary grades.

(In support with concerns) The intent of putting the special education safety net in statute is supported, but the House budget proposal addresses many of these issues. The SPI was already directed to examine the excess cost methodology and has developed a recommendation. Keeping the safety net in the appropriations act provides greater flexibility to make changes as needed. A study of free and reduced lunch is also not needed in statute. This is not something to be taken lightly because eligibility affects funding for a number of important programs. Lack of a career academies proposal represents a gap in the continuum of education and loss of an important link to postsecondary education.

(With concerns) Funding for all-day kindergarten must cover all students. It is not right to force school districts to charge tuition or use their own resources to cover the remaining students. A six-year implementation plan for phasing-in all-day kindergarten would be ideal.

Demonstration projects are a concern when core education and instruction is not adequately funded.

(Opposed) Eligibility standards and processes for free and reduced lunch are established by the federal government. School districts are required to follow them, and the federal government conducts its own audits. It is not an appropriate use of state resources for such an audit.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; and Judy Hartmann, Governor's Policy Office.

(In support with concerns) Jennifer Priddy, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Education and Training Coordinating Board.

(With concerns) Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

(Opposed) Mitch Denning, Washington School Nutrition Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Education. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Dunshee, Vice Chair; Cody, Conway, Darneille, Ericks, Fromhold, Grant, Haigh, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Morrell, Pettigrew, Schual-Berke, Seaquist and P. Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Buri, Chandler, Dunn, Hinkle, Kretz, McDermott and Priest.

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Education:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except section 4, relating to the establishment of the Community Learning Center Program, which takes effect August 1, 2007.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is in favor of this bill; particularly the proposal for voluntary all-day kindergarten. We feel like a full-day program can make a real difference. We also strongly support the Washington Community Learning Center Program. We're always in favor of ways to support career development projects, like those created in the section of the bill dealing with career pathways.

The Workforce Board is in support of the grants to create career pathways. This program comes from recommendations from the Washington Learns report, and also reflects findings from the Workforce Board strategic plan. There is nothing in the House budget to support this program; however, the subcommittee did have \$1 million in their budget for health career academies. The omission in the full House budget might be simply an oversight that will be reconsidered. These grants represent a similar concept to Running Start for the trades, but in high demand fields. Our research shows that students are more likely to pursue post-secondary education if they complete a Career Technical Education program. What is most striking is that students who were level 1 and 2 on the WASL experience an even greater difference in terms of post-secondary educational attainment.

(With concerns) The Washington Education Association is a strong supporter of all day Kindergarten. We support the House budget funding of this program, which funds all kids within eligible schools, not just free-and-reduced-price-lunch-eligible students. In terms of the facilities costs, although some districts already have enough space, its our understanding that school districts can run bonds to cover this cost, and a state match is not required.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Kyra Kester, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Wes Pruitt, Workforce Board.

(With concerns) Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.