

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6063

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 6, 2014

Title: An act relating to efforts to close and eliminate the opportunity gap.

Brief Description: Concerning closing and elimination the opportunity gap.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, Dammeier, Hill, Becker, Tom, Braun and Bailey.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/03/14, 2/06/14 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Brown, Fain, Hill and Rivers.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Rolfes, Assistant Ranking Member; Cleveland.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Billig and Mullet.

Staff: Katherine Taylor (786-7434)

Background: A collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is a legal contract between employers and employees which regulates the terms and conditions of employees in their workplace, their duties, and the duties of the employer. It is usually the result of a process of collective bargaining between an employer and a union representing workers. Specifically, in Washington the collective bargaining laws for school classified staff and certificated staff, but not superintendents or business managers, require that CBAs cover wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment or working conditions.

According to statute, the Education Employment Relations Act's purpose is to prescribe certain rights and obligations of the educational employees of the school districts of the state of Washington, and to establish procedures governing the relationship between such

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employees and their employers which are designed to meet the special requirements and needs of public employment in education.

According to the statute, the chapter of law on public employees' collective bargaining is intended to promote the continued improvement of the relationship between public employers and their employees by providing a uniform basis for implementing the right of public employees to join labor organizations of their own choosing and to be represented by such organizations in matters concerning their employment relations with public employers.

Summary of Bill: Each CBA entered, reopened, and renewed after the effective date of this section, which is proposed to be placed in the chapter of law on the Education Employment Relations Act, must specifically address actions to be taken in accordance with the agreement to close and eliminate the opportunity gap.

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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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 is a simple bill. It is useful to shine a light on if the school district has the resources to deal with the opportunity gap. We could be more prescriptive.

CON: There are a lack of jobs in our districts, and racism is present. This is not realistic. A lot of our students do not have books or sometimes electricity. Teachers are not at fault for the opportunity gap. We need to focus on reducing class sizes. Teachers cannot fix problems that are outside their zone of influence, such as students being poor. Birth weight, food insecurity, pollution, and much more cause the problems. We come from high schools with high levels of free and reduced-price lunch qualified students. We spend a lot of our own time working with these students to help eliminate the gap. We need to work on the grassroots level. There are things outside of the classroom that would help reduce the gap. We need to focus on improving higher education. We think closing the opportunity gap is very important. Dealing with this gray area is going to make negotiations even harder. This could open all areas for negotiation. Teachers already work on eliminating the opportunity gap every day. There are studies on the opportunity gap. Feeding kids properly helps them perform better. Funding and unfunded mandates are a major issue.

OTHER: This bill will not solve this very real problem. We need wrap-around services and other services for these students. Negotiating CBAs is difficult. This bill will make it more

difficult. Staffing ratio is very important. Some school districts have this type of information in their CBAs already.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jami Lund, Freedom Foundation.

CON: Erica Reichardt, Donna Hollenback, elementary teachers, Franklin Pierce School District; Derryl Finney, High School Teacher, Tacoma School District; Adrienne Dale, teacher, Tacoma School District; John Burbank, Economic Opportunity Institute; Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn.; Dan Steele, WA Assn. of School Administrators.

OTHER: Lani Todd, Service Employees International Union 925; Jerry Bender, Assn. of WA School Principals.