

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6163

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

Title: An act relating to implementing the summer knowledge improvement pilot program.

Brief Description: Creating the summer knowledge improvement pilot program.

Sponsors: Senators Billig, Litzow, Frockt, Dammeier, McAuliffe, Rolfes, King, Tom, Kohl-Welles and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/29/14, 2/06/14 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6163 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Rolfes, Assistant Ranking Member; Billig, Brown, Cleveland, Fain, Hill, Mullet and Rivers.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Research shows that many students, especially students from low-income families, experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Studies have also documented that summer learning loss is cumulative over time and widens the existing educational opportunity gap. Some studies recommend participation in summer learning programs or longer school year programs to mitigate summer learning loss and improve student academic performance.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) Council. ELOs are provided by community-based organizations outside the traditional school day, week, or year, using activities that complement classroom-based instruction, which may focus on academic and nonacademic areas. The ELO Council (Council) is established to advise the Governor, Legislature, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) on an ELO system. Up to 15 participants may be invited to participate in the Council, but the membership must include representatives of specified entities. The Governor's Office with SPI must convene the Council. The Council must provide an annual report beginning December 1, 2014. The Council must also provide a vision and guidance to support an ELO

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system, and other programs for early elementary through secondary education so that needs for a statewide, coordinated ELO system are identified and the system developed. The Council must identify fiscal, resource, and partnership opportunities, coordinate policy development, set quality standards, and develop a comprehensive ELO action plan to address summer learning loss, provide academic supports, build strong school and community-based organization partnerships, and track performance of ELOs in closing the opportunity gap. When making recommendations, the Council must consider the state menus of best practices to assist struggling students in English language arts, including intensive reading and literacy improvement for K-4 students, mathematics, and reducing disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

Summer Knowledge Improvement Pilot (SKIP) Program. The SKIP program is created to provide state funding for three years for 20 additional student learning days for up to ten schools beginning with the 2015-16 school year. The SKIP program is intended to combat summer learning loss; provide an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of an extended school year to improve student achievement and close educational opportunity gaps; and provide successful models for other districts to follow.

School districts with eligible schools may apply to participate in the program. Eligible schools are those that have at least grades kindergarten through fifth, and 75 percent or more of the students qualify for the free and reduced priced lunch program. Districts that apply must solicit input, including at a public meeting, on the design of the plan from the staff at the school, parents, and the community. The final plan must be adopted by the school district board of directors at a public meeting. The plan must include the best practices and evidence-based strategies to be implemented over the extra 20 days for all the students enrolled in the school; and evidence that at least 70 percent of the certificated and classified school staff who work in the building at least two days per week, and the principal of the school, agree to the plan.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction must review the plans, and to the extent practicable, select districts from diverse geographic regions of the state and include different sizes of school districts and schools. Other selection criteria include the likelihood of the proposed best practices and evidence-based strategies improving student achievement.

The grant program is subject to funds being appropriated in the 2015-2017 budget for the specific purpose of the grants for the SKIP program. Grant funding for each school in the pilot program must be equal to 20 days of the average daily per-student amount of all the basic education and non-basic education funding provided by the state, including transportation and safety net funds. Non-state provided funds may also be used.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy must evaluate the pilot program and provide interim reports to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2016, and December 1, 2017. The final report with recommendations as to whether the SKIP program should be modified, continued, or expanded must be submitted by December 1, 2018. The act expires September 1, 2019.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): The intent language is expanded.

Council. ELOs are defined. The Council is created to advise the Governor, Legislature, and SPI on an ELO system. Council members are provided. Several specific tasks are given to the Council.

SKIP. It is specified that the 20 additional days are not at the beginning or end of the 180-day calendar, but are outside the regular district calendar. Districts must provide in the plan when the days will be used. The district plan must provide whether the district will collaborate with community-based programs and if so, then how. Language declaring the SKIP program as not part of basic education is removed. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy's evaluation must include looking at the school's student assessment scores prior to the pilot; and whether 20 days are the optimal number to be provided for additional support. The grant program is subject to funds being appropriated in the 2015-2017 budget for the specific purpose of grants for the SKIP program.

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 on Original Bill: PRO: Summer learning loss is a critical problem that we must address. Almost every student experiences summer learning loss; some more than others. Studies show that two-thirds of most students' summer learning loss occur in elementary school and disproportionately impact students who already experience educational opportunity gaps. This is not summer school but school with all its structure for all students in the school so there is no stigma. Funding would not be required until next biennium. All students do not learn in the same way or in the same amount of time and that is why extended learning opportunities outside of the school day and the school calendar are so important. The additional 20 days aligns with research that shows that additional time spent on academics leads to greater student learning. These added days should be compulsory attendance days. The application to participate in the pilot should require a plan to collect data during the 2014 school year on student and teacher absences, student discipline, and student assessment scores to help with the evaluation of the pilot. The pilot should be open to school districts who want to have a balanced calendar not just add days at the beginning and end. If the pilot is scaled back due to the cost then make sure that enough of the program is kept to have a valid evaluation. School districts know that summer learning loss is a problem but are struggling to provide summer programs to address it. A major barrier to accessing programs outside the school is often transportation so we are glad to see that funds may be used for transportation. Funding for this program needs to be part of basic education. Grants go away and the funding needs to be continued to fully address the problem.

OTHER: I recommend including the 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. timeframe as part of the program and including evidence-based practices that are fun to address summer learning loss.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Billig, prime sponsor; Jan Link, Academic Link Outreach, Director; Karyssa Mathison, Larry Wewel, Academic Link Outreach; Phyllis Frank, former State Board of Education member, National Association for Year-Round Education; Frank Ordway, League of Education Voters; Marie Sullivan, WA State School Director's Assn.; Alex Hur, Equity in Education Coalition; Dave Larson, Tukwila School District; Julia Suliman, State Board of Education.

OTHER: Lynne Tucker, School's Out WA.