

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1618

As Passed House:
February 27, 2017

Title: An act relating to family and community engagement coordinators.

Brief Description: Concerning family and community engagement coordinators.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Harris, Santos, Johnson, Bergquist and Kagi).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/13/17, 2/14/17 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/27/17, 95-1.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Specifies certain minimum duties for a family and community engagement coordinator within a school building or school district.
- Provides that state funding allocated to school districts for family and community engagement coordinators in the prototypical school funding formula may be used only for family and community engagement purposes.
- Replaces the the term "parent involvement coordinator" in the prototypical school funding formula statute and the Learning Assistance Program statute with the term "family and community engagement coordinator."

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Harris, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Hargrove, Johnson, Kilduff, Lovick, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Slatter, Springer, Steele, Stokesbary and Volz.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

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.

Background:

Family and Community Engagement.

State Definition. In 2016 the Legislature directed the Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO) to collaborate with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee to recommend a definition, and model or framework, for the staff position that is variously referred to as "family engagement coordinator," "parent and family engagement coordinator," and "parent involvement coordinator." The OEO submitted its report to the Legislature on December 1, 2016. The report did not recommend a definition or framework for the staff position, but did recommended certain steps that the Legislature could take to provide leadership, clarity, and vision in the development and sustainability of meaningful, culturally-responsive school and family partnerships.

Federal Requirements. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) continues the federal No Child Left Behind Act requirement that states and school districts develop policies and set aside funds to support parent involvement in Title I schools. Under the ESSA, school districts must set aside at least 1 percent of Title I funds for parent and family engagement activities. Ninety percent of the funds must go directly to schools, with priority given to "high need" schools. Funds must be spent in specified areas, for example, on training school staff regarding engagement strategies or on programs that reach families at home, in their communities, and at school.

Prototypical School Funding Formula.

Legislation adopted in 2010 (i.e. Substitute House Bill 2776, enacted as Chapter 236, Laws of 2010) created the prototypical school allocation formula. The use of prototypical schools is intended to illustrate the level of resources needed to operate a school of a particular size using commonly understood terms such as class size, hours of instruction, and specified staff positions. Districts have discretion over how the money is spent, subject to some limits.

This formula allocates funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support a "prototypical" school that serves an assumed number of students at defined elementary, middle, and high school levels. The statute includes "parent involvement coordinators" in a list of building-level staff positions, but the allocation listed for this position is 0.00. Since 2013 the omnibus operating appropriations act has allocated 0.0825 per prototypical elementary school for parent involvement coordinators. Beginning in September 2022, the statutory prototypical school allocation formula will include funding for one "parent involvement coordinator" per prototypical elementary, middle, and high school.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A family and community engagement coordinator within a school building or school district has, at a minimum, the following duties:

- to identify and bridge barriers to students' and families' access to needed services;
- to consult with an advisory group of students' families, who reflect the demographic diversity within the school building or school district, concerning, among other things, how to support students and families in a culturally responsive manner; and

- to partner with community-based organizations to increase resources for family and community engagement, including academic and nonacademic services and programs for students and families.

The funding allocated to school districts for family and community engagement coordinators in the statutory prototypical school funding formula or the omnibus operating appropriations act may be used only for family and community engagement purposes.

The term "parent involvement coordinator" in the prototypical school funding formula statute and the Learning Assistance Program statute is changed to "family and community engagement coordinator."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 3, relating to the prototypical school funding formula, which takes effect September 1, 2017.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) If family is not included in their student's education, there is an impact on student achievement. There are many barriers to family involvement in school, such as poverty, culture, and language. Some schools do not know how best to support or collaborate with families. But most families do want to be part of the solution and help their children succeed. This bill clarifies the definition of family and community engagement coordinator, and puts in basic expectations for the coordinator. This bill came from the OEO recommendations.

America has free public school, but this is not the case in some countries. Students think that it is important for families and communities to be involved to help students that need it. When there is bullying at school, the bully or the person being bullied can go to the coordinator and express their frustration, and get help. These coordinators might be able to help at events.

Some parents have gone through a parent leadership academy. The more that families become engaged in education and the well-being of their students, the better their students perform academically. Some parents are not available to help their children or do not know how to help. There are lots of issues that affect students and many of these issues affect students from every race. The coordinator can identify concerns early, such as students who are at risk of dropping out of school. The coordinator can provide support to students and families that do not have access to the educator and social service system.

The role of the coordinator is essential in schools. There are parent volunteer coordinators, but how they are used is different in every school and the position is not always defined. The new coordinator position will make sure that everyone, even businesses in the community, is engaged. Schools look different today than they did 20, 30, or 40 years ago and it is

important to get up to date. All schools should have this opportunity to engage families and communities.

Some parents think that it is important to engage families in student success. Expanding infrastructure and resources for family engagement coordinators around the state is a win for students, families, educators, and schools. Having a consistent definition is important. Prioritizing this work and dedicating funding makes a strong value statement and ensures equitable access to the coordinators. Specifying that consultation must take place with an advisory group that reflects the demographic diversity within schools and district is important because family engagement often focuses on the families who are already engaged.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ortiz-Self, prime sponsor; Sibusiso Ndhlovu; Phetheni Ndhlovu; Sally Brownfield, Education Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee; and Sarah Butcher, Washington State Parent Teacher Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Andrea Cobb, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals.