

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5236

As of February 8, 2017

Title: An act relating to the creation of a civic learning public-private partnership.

Brief Description: Creating the civic learning public-private partnership.

Sponsors: Senators Zeiger, Fain, Rolfes, Warnick, Rivers, Lias, Angel, Keiser, Kuderer and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/26/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a Civic Learning Public-Private Partnership composed of legislators and others.
- Requires the Civic Learning Public-Private Partnership to establish six demonstration civic learning partnerships with local communities to assess and implement in-depth civic learning in K-12 and take actions to strengthen civic learning in schools and expanded learning opportunities.
- Creates the Civic Learning Public-Private Partnership account to support the work of the Civic Learning Public-Private Partnership.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Under the basic education goal for school districts, the districts must provide students the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills in specified academic subjects, including civics. Since the 2008-09 school year, school districts must require students in the fourth or fifth grade to complete at least one classroom-based assessment in civics. The civics assessment may be selected from a list of classroom-based assessments approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). School districts must annually submit implementation verification reports to the SPI documenting the use of the classroom-based assessments in civics.

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.

The state minimum high school graduation requirements adopted by the State Board of Education include the requirement for students to obtain three social studies credits, with a 0.5 credit required in civics. Course content to earn the civics credit must include, but not be limited to:

- federal, state and local government organization and procedures;
- rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the Washington State and United States Constitutions;
- current issues addressed at each level of government; and
- electoral issues, including elections, ballot measures, initiatives, and referenda.

In 2014, the Legislature established the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Council to advise the Governor, Legislature, and SPI on a comprehensive ELO system, with particular attention paid to solutions to summer learning loss. Current law defines ELOs as the following:

- culturally responsive enrichment and learning activities, which may focus on academic and nonacademic areas; the arts; civic engagement; service-learning; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and competencies for college and career readiness;
- school-based programs that provide expanded learning and enrichment for students beyond the traditional school day, week, or calendar; and
- structured, intentional, and creative learning environments outside the traditional school day that are provided by community-based organizations in partnership with schools and align in-school and out-of-school learning through activities that complement classroom-based instruction.

Summary of Bill: The Civic Learning Public-Private Partnership (Partnership) is established. The Partnership is composed of 18 members, four of which are legislators. All members must be appointed by August 1, 2017, and will generally serve two-year staggered terms. The members of the Partnership will select the chair from the legislative members. To the extent that funds are appropriated or are available, the Partnership may hire a staff person. Additional staff support may be provided by the agencies and organizations represented on the Partnership. Legislative members will receive per diem and reimbursement for travel expenses.

The Partnership's goals include ensuring K-12 students in schools and expanded learning opportunities have the knowledge and skills to engage effectively in government as citizens. To achieve this goal, the Partnership will establish, with local communities, six demonstration sites for civic learning; contract or facilitate civic learning providers to offer professional development to K-12 teachers and providers of ELOs; ensure prioritization of underserved students; work with the SPI to develop evaluation standards and a procedure for endorsing civic learning curriculum; assist in developing guidelines and protocols for teachers and others to use in delivering civic education to students; develop a web-based interactive tool for teaching civics; and annually report by December 1st to the Governor, Legislature, and the SPI.

The Partnership must offer small grant amounts to teachers and ELO providers to implement civic learning. The SPI must make a list of approved materials available to school districts.

The Washington Civic Learning Public-Private Partnership account is created to support the work of the Partnership, including hiring a staff person and providing travel and other expenses of non-legislative members of the Partnership. Revenues to the account may include private sector or foundation gifts or grants, federal funds, legislative appropriations or funds from other sources. The SPI authorizes the expenditures from the account at the direction of the Partnership but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

Appropriation: \$250,000 to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the purposes of this act.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2017.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: Yes.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Everyone, especially those on the capital campus, has their own personal story about how they learned civics. This year there are other education topics before the Legislature, such as the paramount duty for the state to amply fund basic education. But to understand that duty, one needs to understand other provisions of the state constitution, including that the people have the power to govern ourselves and engage with government. What is more important to learn than knowing that we have individual rights and responsibilities that go along with those rights. There is a significant gap, a crevasse, in the knowledge that students have about civic learning because in too many schools social studies programs are gone. It is the responsibility of all of us to teach each new generation about civics. It is worrisome that our civil discourse is breaking down instead of resolving our differences in a civil and constructive way. Civic learning can teach how we can talk to each other when we disagree. This bill holds great promise to get the Legislature invested in civic learning, coordinating programs, and providing resources to get students into the community and to bring the community into the schools. Communities will make their own choices about civic learning curriculum, how to structure their program, and how to scale these programs so all teachers and students get high quality civic learning. Both the State Board of Education and the principals' association would like to have representation on the Partnership.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hans Zeiger, Prime Sponsor; David Beard, School's Out Washington; Ken Mortland, citizen; Arlen Harris, citizen; Sarah Clinton, YMCA Youth & Government; Margaret Fisher, Administrative Office of the Courts; Kevin Sparks, citizen; Ralph Munroe, former Secretary of State; Ben Rarick, State Board of Education; Marlin Appelwick, Council on Public Legal Education.

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