
Education Committee

HB 2387

Brief Description: Limiting the exposure of public school students and school personnel to diesel emissions from school bus engines.

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, Ybarra, Leavitt, Fitzgibbon, Callan, Shewmake, Ormsby, Wylie, Doglio and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt rules to limit the exposure of students and school personnel to diesel emissions from school bus engines.
- Specifies that the rules must, with limited exceptions, require school district compliance by September 1, 2022.
- Allows school districts to adopt additional requirements to limit the exposure of students and school personnel to diesel emissions from school buses, and to maintain previously adopted requirements if they meet with specified requirements.

Hearing Date: 1/20/20

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Federal and state requirements govern the equipping and safe operation of public and privately owned school buses used for student transportation. For example, federal requirements establish safety and emission standards for school buses, while state requirements govern the training and qualifications of school bus drivers.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in meeting its obligation to adopt rules to govern bus drivers, publishes the School Bus Driver Handbook. The handbook includes numerous requirements related to the safe operation of school buses by qualified personnel. The

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handbook also includes provisions related to limiting engine idling to reduce the possibility of harmful exposure to school bus emissions.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed recommendations to reduce the health risks associated with exposure to diesel exhaust from school buses, including recommending that school districts:

- establish guidelines to reduce idling time and related emissions;
- work closely with bus companies and bus drivers to implement the guidelines; and
- work closely with bus companies to retrofit buses with pollution controls and to purchase the cleanest new buses.

The EPA also operates a Clean School Bus national idle reduction campaign that designed to help communities reduce emissions from older diesel school buses. Participation in the program is voluntary, but numerous states and municipalities have adopted requirements for reducing engine idling.

Summary of Bill:

By September 1, 2021, the OSPI, in consultation with the Department of Ecology and the Department of Health, must adopt rules to limit the exposure of students and school personnel to diesel emissions from school bus engines. In developing and adopting the rules, the OSPI must solicit input from interested parties, including persons with relevant expertise in health and transportation issues.

The adopted rules must:

- establish limits on the idling of diesel school bus engines while the buses are on school property or are otherwise engaged in providing student transportation, and may include other requirements to lessen the exposure of students and school personnel to diesel emissions from school bus engines;
- include potential exemptions, including exemptions necessary for weather conditions, health and safety issues, and vehicle maintenance;
- except as provided otherwise, require district compliance by September 1, 2022;
- be included in any version of the OSPI's School Bus Drivers Handbook revised and published after September 1, 2021; and
- be revised periodically, especially in response to idle reduction technologies and alternative fuel sources that are or may be employed in school buses in Washington.

School districts may adopt additional requirements to limit the exposure of students and school personnel to diesel emissions from school buses. School districts may also maintain, enforce, and modify locally adopted requirements enacted before the effective date of the legislation if those requirements substantially conform with and do not diminish or otherwise impair the rules adopted by the OSPI, or exceed requirements established in the OSPI's rules.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2020.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.