

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1692

As Passed House:

February 8, 2024

Title: An act relating to increasing youth engagement in the legislative process by creating student advisory groups to examine issues important to youth.

Brief Description: Creating student advisory groups.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Bergquist, Christian, Gregerson, Santos, Pollet, Macri and Simmons).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/8/23, 2/15/23 [DPS], 1/16/24, 1/26/24 [DP2S].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/8/24, 83-14.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Creates a Legislative District Student Council, composed of seven high school student members, in each legislative district to serve as nonpartisan advisory bodies, examine issues affecting youth and education, and make recommendations to legislators.
- Creates a nonpartisan Youth Civic Engagement Caucus, composed of one middle school student member from each legislative district, for the purpose of advising the Legislature on issues affecting youth and education.
- Requires the Washington State Student Directors' Association to form a Student Representative Network composed of student school board representatives to examine issues important to youth and engage in the legislative process.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- Requires the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, in coordination with the Student Representative Network, to organize an annual day of youth civic education in Olympia.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Ramos, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Gregerson and Mena.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Christian, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Cheney, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Benjamin Ratcliff (786-7291) and Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) is a nonpartisan, youth-led committee of 22 student members created for the purpose of examining issues of importance to youth, including those related to education, employment, youth participation in state and municipal government, safe environments for youth, substance abuse, emotional and physical health, foster care, poverty, and youth access to services on a statewide and municipal basis. The LYAC is responsible for:

- advising the Legislature and various study groups about proposed and pending legislation and policy matters relating to youth;
- conducting periodic seminars for its members regarding leadership, government, and the Legislature;
- accepting and soliciting grants and donations to support its activities; and
- reporting annually to the Legislature on its activities, including proposed legislation that implements recommendations of the LYAC.

Each year, the LYAC also organizes a day known as Action Day, when youth travel from across Washington to the State Capitol in Olympia for the purposes of civic engagement and direct engagement with the legislative process.

The LYAC is student-led and coadministered by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and the Washington State Leadership Board.

Washington State School Directors' Association.

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is a body consisting of all locally elected school board directors and school board members from each of Washington's school districts. The WSSDA was created for the coordination of policymaking, control, and management among the school districts to increase the efficiency of the common school system. The WSSDA has various responsibilities, which include:

- conducting studies and disseminating information in order to increase efficiency in local school board administration;
- providing advice and assistance to school boards;
- providing certain services upon request by a school board, including for specialized services, research information, and consultants to advise and assist school boards in particular problem areas;
- creating model policy and procedures for topics relating to waiving credit for high school graduation, nurturing a positive social and emotional school and classmate climate, implementing student discipline policy, and accommodating students with epilepsy or other seizure disorders; and
- developing cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion standards and training for school director governance.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is Washington's state education agency. The nonpartisan office is responsible for overseeing public kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) education, allocating funding, and implementing state laws regarding education.

Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:

Creation of Legislative District Student Councils.

A Legislative District Student Council (Council) is created in each legislative district in Washington to serve as nonpartisan advisory bodies. The Councils are responsible for examining issues affecting youth and education and making recommendations to legislators on those issues. Council members are students in grades 9 through 12 who attend a public school, private school, or homeschool (a qualifying school) or students at a community or technical college. Model processes, programs, and duties for the Councils are to be developed by a statewide organization that provides leadership opportunities to students, as selected by the OSPI. Each Council may not conduct more than four in-person meetings.

The organization selected by the OSPI must contribute to the development of various aspects of the Council program. These include:

- the processes and procedures that may be used to set up each Council;
- an application and selection process that may be used to select student members to serve on the Council;
- model practices regarding increasing student engagement; and
- the distribution of information about participating in the Councils, including the

application process and timeline.

Chairs of each Council are selected by the WSSDA to two-year terms. Council chairs must coordinate with the legislators from their legislative district to establish and maintain their district's Council.

Each Council has a maximum of seven members:

- one chair, selected by the WSSDA;
- one vice chair, who is the Youth Civic Engagement Caucus member from the Council's respective legislative district;
- up to two student board representatives, selected by the WSSDA, who attend a qualifying school that is located within that Council's legislative district; and
- at least three additional members who are under the age of 21 at the time of appointment and attend either a qualifying school or a community or technical college that is located within that Council's legislative district.

Initial Council chairs must be selected by October 1, 2025, by the organization identified by the OSPI. Members are selected to two-year terms, initially by a committee consisting of the chairs of each Council. Initial members must be selected by November 15, 2025. The selection of subsequent members is the responsibility of each Council and must occur no later than October 1, 2027, and on October 1 every two years thereafter.

To the extent feasible, the members of each Council must attend either a qualifying school or a community or technical college that is located within their Council's district. However, if no students from that district apply, students attending either a qualifying school or a community or technical college in an adjacent legislative district may be selected for membership. The process for selecting student members must take into consideration the balance of representation among the various grades, with at least one student being in grade 11 and one being in grade 12.

When engaging in outreach and recruiting efforts to educate students and schools about opportunities to participate in the Councils, and when creating an application and selection process, the Lieutenant Governor's office, the organization selected by the OSPI, and the WSSDA must comply with the principles of the State Pro-Equity Anti-Racism Plan and Playbook as developed by the Office of Equity.

The organization selected by the OSPI must, no later than December 31, 2025, submit a report to the Legislature detailing:

- the number of Councils established;
- the legislative district of each Council;
- a list of schools represented on Councils;
- grade levels represented on Councils; and
- the demographics of each Council.

Creation of the Student Representative Network.

The WSSDA must form a Student Representative Network (Network) consisting of student school board representatives to examine issues of importance to youth and engage in the legislative process. The WSSDA must facilitate a connection between Network members and the legislators in their legislative district and provide Network members with learning opportunities about education policy. In legislative districts where there are no established student board representatives, the WSSDA must communicate with the appropriate school districts to create awareness of the role and encourage participation. The WSSDA must invite legislators to participate in the Network in an advisory capacity.

The Network's duties include:

- advising the Legislature and various study groups about proposed and pending legislation relating to matters impacting youth;
- developing and assembling resources for new and existing student board representatives;
- providing training, photos, and other content for WSSDA publications;
- collaborating with WSSDA standing committees, advisory committees, task forces, and caucuses as invited; and
- providing additional student voices at WSSDA events.

The Network, in consultation with the WSSDA, must issue a report on December 1 of each year to the Legislature on the number of student board representatives in the state and the activities of the Network.

Creation of the Youth Civic Engagement Caucus.

A middle school level Youth Civic Engagement Caucus (YCEC) is created. The advisory responsibilities of the YCEC shall mirror those of the LYAC. The OSPI shall select a statewide organization that provides leadership opportunities to students to create model processes and procedures that may be used to establish and maintain the YCEC. The model processes and procedures must be completed by September 1, 2025. The YCEC's membership must, to the greatest extent possible, consist of one student in grades 6 through 8 from each legislative district. The initial members of the YCEC shall be balanced between sixth and seventh grade students, with the sixth graders serving three-year terms and the seventh graders serving two-year terms. All students subsequently selected to the YCEC shall serve two-year terms. The YCEC members serve as the vice chairs of the Council in their legislative district.

Other Provisions Related to the LYAC.

The LYAC, in coordination with the Network and the YCEC, must organize Action Day, the in-person annual day of youth civic education in Olympia, as well as an annual virtual town hall meeting in the three-month period preceding the commencement of the legislative session.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Young people are the individuals most impacted by the work of the Legislature, yet they are almost entirely left out of the process that deeply affects their opportunities for success in life. Youth are often left in the margins of decision-making and used as anecdotes rather than being allowed to provide any substantive input. By providing direct opportunities for children to speak on issues impacting their success, this bill would help to recognize, prioritize, and drive solutions critical to the success of the education system and other policy priorities for youth in Washington.

(Opposed) This bill asks too much of the LYAC too fast. By forcing the LYAC to expand its membership from 22 members to 49, the bill would make the administration of the LYAC's duties difficult to organize. Also, while the LYAC supports more youth representation in Washington, it does not believe that the LYAC is the appropriate group to be setting up these Councils.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Steve Bergquist, prime sponsor; and Erica Limon, Communities in Schools of Washington Network.

(Opposed) Natasha Kalombo, Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.