

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5054

As Passed Senate, February 28, 2023

Title: An act relating to promoting and facilitating the use of professional learning communities.

Brief Description: Promoting and facilitating the use of professional learning communities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Dhingra, Nobles, Saldaña, Valdez and Wilson, C.).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/16/23, 2/01/23 [DPS, DNP].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 2/28/23, 27-21.

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Modifies the definition of instructional hours to include hours students are engaging in educational activities under the supervision of noncertificated staff while teachers participate in professional learning communities (PLCs).
- Encourages school districts to establish a school calendar that provides up to four hours per week for teachers to engage in PLCs during the school day.
- Requires that, if providing time for PLCs, the framework characteristics of the PLC must be consistent with professional learning requirements and must be established through collective bargaining.
- Provides a definition for professional learning community.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5054 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hunt and Pedersen.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; Dozier, McCune and Mullet.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Professional Learning Communities. A professional learning community (PLC) is generally a collaborating learning group comprised of colleagues within a particular work environment or field. In education, this often takes the form of teachers conducting professional development or professional learning in a group-based setting.

Instructional Hours. School districts in Washington must meet annual minimum requirements for providing instructional hours and school days. Districts must offer students a district-wide average of at least 1080 hours for students in grades 9 through 12 and a minimum of 1000 instructional hours for students in kindergarten through grade 8. School districts must also offer a minimum of 180 days of instruction each year to students in all grades.

Summary of First Substitute Bill: Professional Learning Communities. "Professional learning community" is defined as a group of educators within a school or school district that meets regularly to share expertise, reflect on their practice, and work collaboratively to enhance their knowledge and skills to teach and support students' academic, social, and emotional learning and growth. The definition also states that PLC can be made up of educators across different subject and support areas, grade levels and levels of leadership.

If a school district provides time for PLCs to promote ongoing professional learning during the school day, the framework characteristics of the PLC must be consistent with professional learning requirements and must be established through collective bargaining.

School districts are encouraged to promote and facilitate PLCs by establishing a school calendar that provides up to four hours per week for certificated instructional staff to engage in PLCs during the school day.

Instructional Hours. The definition of instructional hours is modified to include hours students are engaging in educational activities under the supervision of noncertificated school staff while certificated staff participate in professional learning communities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This bill will fill in the pieces for us to create total solutions. When executing well, PLCs are a strong mechanism that allow for teachers to learn and grow together. This bill hopes to transform learning into a mastery base system. We learn at other times besides when a teacher is in front of us, this bill will provide time for those other learning opportunities.

CON: This bill will deny students learning opportunities. After closing schools due to COVID-19, we need to find solutions to fix gaps in student learning. This bill will reduce the amount of time students are in a classroom.

OTHER: The bill would result in a cut in instructional hours at a time when students are struggling. Students need in-person instruction; a lack of quality instruction has led to students leaving the public school system.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Nasue Nishida, Washington Education Association.

CON: Julie Barrett, Conservative Ladies of Washington.

OTHER: Liv Finne, Washington Policy Center.

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