

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5923

As of January 11, 2024

Title: An act relating to fentanyl and other substance use prevention education.

Brief Description: Addressing fentanyl and other substance use prevention education.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Dhingra, Cleveland, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Liias, Nguyen, Nobles, Trudeau, Valdez, Warnick and Wilson, C.; by request of Office of the Governor.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/11/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Tasks the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and other agencies to review and update substance use prevention education materials and resources provided to students and families in middle and high schools.
- Directs OSPI to revise the health and physical education K-12 learning standards to include knowledge and understanding related to fentanyl, opioid, and other life-threatening drug use.
- Requires education to prevent fentanyl and other opioid use to be provided once a year to all students in seventh and ninth grade.
- Strongly encourages school districts to work with their educational service districts and substance abuse intervention specialists to provide this education and invite families where possible.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

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.

Background: Substance Abuse Intervention Specialists. State law directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to provide grants for drug and alcohol abuse prevention and intervention programs for students, subject to appropriations. These grants may be used for services provided by a substance abuse intervention specialist or for dedicated staff time for counseling and intervention services.

Services provided by a substance abuse intervention specialist may include:

- individual and family counseling, including preventive counseling;
- assessment referral for treatment;
- referral to peer support groups;
- aftercare;
- development and supervision of student mentor programs;
- staff training; and
- development and coordination of school drug and alcohol core teams involving staff, students, parents, and community members.

Student Assistance Prevention and Intervention Services Program. According to the Health Care Authority (HCA), this agency contracts with each of the nine educational service districts (ESDs) to administer this program. This program places student assistance professionals in local schools to serve students at risk of using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and students struggling with substance abuse. General prevention activities include supervising peer leadership clubs; providing information to students, staff, and families; and coordinating with community services.

Summary of Bill: Education Materials and Resources. By September 1, 2024, OSPI, in collaboration with ESDs, HCA, the Department of Health, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, must review frequently used substance use prevention education materials and resources provided to students and families in middle and high schools. These agencies must identify changes or additional materials and resources to include information about the potential lethality and other risks associated with the use of fentanyl and other opioids and behavioral health resources. These agencies must consult with Indian tribes for input to ensure effectiveness for use in state tribal education compact schools and for tribal children, youth, and families.

By December 1, 2024, OSPI must make updated materials and resources available on its website for use by school districts, ESDs, and community-based organizations. OSPI and the other agencies must review the materials and resources at least once every other year thereafter.

School districts that serve students in middle and high school are strongly encouraged to work with their ESD and substance abuse intervention specialists to provide fentanyl and other opioid prevention education to students and their families where possible.

Health and Physical Education Learning Standards. By December 1, 2024, OSPI must

complete revisions to the health and physical education K-12 learning standards that include knowledge and understanding related to fentanyl, opioid, and other life-threatening drug use.

Education to prevent fentanyl and other opioid use included in health standards must be provided once a year to all students in seventh and ninth grade with information on behavioral health resources as a component of required health programs. This education must be provided to as many students in these grades as possible during the 2024-25 school year, and to all students in these grades thereafter.

Schools are encouraged to provide additional programming at their discretion. School districts and ESDs must consider using the materials and resources developed by OSPI and the other agencies.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 2, 2024.

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: PRO: Deaths related to fentanyl are tragic because they are preventable. It's important that students understand the risks of opioids. Currently, the state learning standards do not mention fentanyl. High school students often feel invincible and curious, and schools can be a place where they learn about risks, hazards, and treatments. Peer-led groups can help prevent students from turning to drugs as a coping mechanism. Educational service districts are already doing some of this work and can support the additional work along with OSPI. Public schools have become part of the public health system. This legislation can save children's lives.

OTHER: Local prevention providers and coalitions should be included in the curriculum selection process.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Jarred-Michael Erickson, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation; Maddy Thompson, Office of the Governor; Melissa Gombosky, Association of Educational Service Districts; Maria Trujillo-Petty; Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals; Eva Wagner, City of Everett Youth Advisory Board; Dixie Grunenfelder, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Zoe Bever, Student - Oak Harbor High School- Community Awareness Peer Educators.

OTHER: Scott Waller, Washington Association for Substance misuse And Violence Prevention.

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