

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2680

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care

Title: An act relating to a model policy for nutrition and physical activity for public schools.

Brief Description: Requiring development of a model policy for nutrition and physical activity for schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Cody, Bailey, Schual-Berke, Simpson, G., Anderson, Morrell, Kenney, Wallace, Rockefeller and Edwards; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/29/04, 2/4/04 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Health to convene an advisory committee to develop a model policy regarding nutrition and physical education for school districts to consider when establishing such policies for their districts.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Campbell, Clibborn, Darneille, Edwards, Moeller, Rodne, Schual-Berke and Skinner.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Benson.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 15 percent of children between 6 and 19 years of age are overweight. This proportion has tripled since 1980.

Obesity in children can increase the likelihood of developing asthma or diabetes. Obesity is estimated to be a contributing factor in the death of over 300,000 Americans per year.

There are several initiatives in Washington to address nutrition and physical activity policies in schools. The National Institutes of Health's Schools Grant is a three-year study in which Seattle Public Schools will track the effects of health-related policies including changes in school lunches. The Washington School Board Challenge is a partnership between the Washington Parent Teacher Association and the Washington Public Health Association to recognize and reward school districts that develop and implement policies to promote proper nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, Action for Healthy Kids is working to provide a model school nutrition and physical activity policy for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Health (Department) is to convene an advisory committee to develop a model policy regarding access to nutritious foods, opportunities for developmentally appropriate exercise, and accurate information related to these topics. The Department is to obtain the assistance of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington State School Directors Association, the State Board of Education, and the Board of Health. The policy must address: (1) the nutritional content of foods and beverages sold or provided during school hours or sold in competition with federal school breakfast and lunch programs; (2) commercial marketing of products and services in schools; and (3) the quality and availability of health, nutrition, and physical education curricula.

The model policy and a recommendation for local adoption of the policy must be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature, and posted on the Department's web site, by January 1, 2005.

The board of directors of each school district must review the model policy and establish its own policy by August 1, 2005.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The State Board of Education is to be consulted in developing the model policy. The findings state that parents and guardians have primary responsibility for addressing childhood obesity and that schools are the logical place to provide students with resources for adopting a health lifestyle.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill forces both a statewide and local conversation of the issue of nutrition and physical activity. Nutrition and physical activity are an important emerging public health issue. This bill maintains local control for establishing guidelines. Schools have an obligation to ensure that the school environment promotes healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating habits.

Testimony Against: There is no enforcement mechanism in the bill.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Patty Hayes, Department of Health; Don Sloma, Board of Health; Brad Boswell, Northwest Automatic Vending Association; Donna Oberg, Washington Association of Local Public Health Officials, WALWICA, and Public Health Seattle/King County; and Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association.

(Support with concerns) David Michener, Washington Soft Drink Association; and Shelly Curtis, Children's Alliance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Concerns) Chris Cheney, Dairy Industry.

(In support) Mary Krinfield and Stacy Shown, PTA.