

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5617

As Passed House - Amended:

April 8, 2009

Title: An act relating to the early learning advisory council.

Brief Description: Changing early learning advisory council provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Kauffman and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Children's Services: 3/26/09, 3/27/09 [DPA].

Floor Activity

Passed House - Amended: 4/8/09, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill (As Amended by House)

- Revises the focus of the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC).
- Adds a representative from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to the ELAC.
- Provides for replacement of an ELAC member who is unable to attend three consecutive meetings.
- Requires the statewide early learning plan be submitted annually to the Legislature beginning August 1, 2009.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Goodman and Seaquist.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120)

Background:

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

Early Learning Advisory Council.

In 2007 the Legislature created the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) to advise the Department of Early Learning (DEL) on statewide early learning needs and progress. The ELAC was directed to work in conjunction with the DEL to develop a statewide early learning plan.

The ELAC may include up to 25 members, as follows:

1. one representative from each of the following state agencies:
 - the DEL;
 - the Office of Financial Management;
 - the Department of Social and Health Services;
 - the Department of Health;
 - the Higher Education Coordinating Board; and
 - the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges;
2. one representative from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
3. seven or more leaders in early childhood education;
4. two members of the House of Representatives, one from each caucus;
5. two members of the Senate, one from each caucus;
6. two parents, one of whom must serve on the DEL's Parent Advisory Council;
7. one representative designated by sovereign tribal governments;
8. two representatives from Thrive by Five Washington; and
9. one representative from the Washington Federation of Independent Schools.

The ELAC members serve staggered two-year terms. Co-chairs are elected by vote, with one representing a state agency and the other representing a nongovernmental entity. The DEL provides staff to support the ELAC and members are reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in carrying out their duties.

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) is a Governor-appointed board representing a partnership of 12 members from business, labor, and government. The Workforce Board is responsible for advising the Governor on workforce development policy, ensuring that the state's workforce preparation services and programs work together, and evaluating performance. The Workforce Board also advocates for the non-baccalaureate training and education needs of workers who account for about 75 percent of the state's workforce. Workforce Board programs include initiatives targeting teens in danger of dropping out of high school to industry skill panels to bridge the gap between high-demand jobs and the training workers need to be successful.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The role of the ELAC is revised so that it advises the DEL on early learning issues leading to the building of a comprehensive system of quality early learning programs and services through:

- aligning resources;
- setting performance measures; and
- ensuring children are ready for school.

Beginning August 1, 2009, the statewide early learning plan must be submitted via an electronic file annually to the Legislature.

A representative from the Workforce Board is added to the ELAC membership. If an appointed member of the ELAC is unable to attend three consecutive meetings, a replacement representative must be appointed to serve the remainder of the term of the initial appointee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 28, 2009.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) When the ELAC was created, all the members were voting members. The goal in making some members non-voting members was to try and achieve some equity in terms of the categories of voting members so that each category would have just one vote. We also want to strengthen the focus of the ELAC in its work with the DEL.

A possible improvement to this bill would be to add representatives from tribal and migrant seasonable Head Start agencies. The Head Start Reauthorization Act provides for grants of up to \$500,000 to states with appropriate representation on an early learning council. At least the current Head Start Coordinator should be on the ELAC, rather than just staffing the ELAC. There may be additional grants available from the federal level and making sure Washington's council has appropriate members for grant eligibility would be a good step.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Kauffman, prime sponsor; and Joel Ryan, Washington Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.