
Education Committee

2SSB 6163

Brief Description: Concerning expanded learning opportunities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Billig, Litzow, Frockt, Dammeier, McAuliffe, Rolfes, King, Tom, Kohl-Welles and Keiser).

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Defines Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) to include school-based programs that provide extended learning and enriching experiences beyond the traditional school day or calendar.
- Establishes an ELO Council, to be convened by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to provide vision, guidance, and assistance related to summer learning opportunities and other initiatives related to a coordinated statewide ELO system.
- Requires the first report from the ELO Council to recommend a framework for a pilot program of 10 schools that would receive state funding for 20 additional student learning days to combat summer learning loss and close educational opportunity gaps.

Hearing Date: 2/19/14

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The term "Expanded Learning Opportunities" (ELOs) is used to describe afterschool and summer learning opportunities provided outside the regular school day or year and delivered through partnerships between schools and community-based organizations (CBOs). The ELOs typically supplement academic learning with enrichment and youth-development activities. There is a body of research literature from a federally funded initiative called 21st Century Community Learning Centers that suggests that the ELOs provided for low-income and other at-risk students can be an effective strategy for closing the educational opportunity gap and reducing summer learning loss.

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.

Research indicates that most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months. Low-income students also lose more than two months in reading achievement. According to a study by Johns Hopkins University, this learning gap widens over time, so that by grade 9, summer learning accounts for two-thirds of the gap in reading between low-income students and their middle-income peers. The same students most affected by summer learning loss were also more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to attend college.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is required to convene a panel of experts to develop state menus of best practices and strategies for assisting struggling students, particularly in elementary reading. The first such menu is due July 1, 2014.

Summary of Bill:

The ELOs are defined as:

- culturally responsive enrichment and learning activities that may focus on an array of academic and nonacademic areas;
- school-based programs that provide extended learning and enriching experiences beyond the traditional school day or calendar; and
- structured, intentional, creative learning environments outside the traditional school day that build partnerships with schools and align in-school and out-of-school learning.

An ELO Council is established to advise the Governor, the Legislature, and the SPI regarding an ELO system, with particular attention to solutions to summer learning loss. The ELO Council must provide vision, guidance, and assistance related to summer learning opportunities, school-year calendar modifications to reduce summer learning loss, and other programs or initiatives for a coordinated statewide ELO system.

The ELO Council must identify resources and partnership opportunities, set quality standards, develop a comprehensive action plan, and track performance of the ELOs in closing the opportunity gap. When making recommendations for best practices, the ELO council must consider the state best practices menus developed by the SPI's expert panel.

The Office of the Governor, in consultation with the SPI, must convene the ELO Council, all of whom must have experience with the ELOs and include representation of diverse student interests and geographical locations. Up to 15 individuals may be invited to participate, with representation from specified organizations and associations. Staff support is provided by the SPI. Appointees to the ELO Council must be selected by May 30, 2014, and the first meeting must be held before August 1, 2014. The first report is due December 1, 2014, and annually thereafter.

The first report from the ELO Council must include a framework and action plan for a pilot program to combat summer learning loss and close educational opportunity gaps, including identification of 10 potential pilot schools, for the Legislature to consider implementing in the 2015-2017 biennium. The pilot program must provide state funding for three years for 20 additional student learning days. Schools that include any two grade levels from grades kindergarten through 5 with 75 percent or more low-income students are eligible.

School districts must solicit input on the design of the plan from school staff, parents, and the community, including at an open meeting. The pilot schools may participate with a community-based organization to provide the ELOs. The pilot program must include an evaluation, an examination of student academic progress, and a recommendation on whether 20 days is the optimal number of days for additional support. The ELO Council must encourage any school district to implement such a pilot program on a faster timeline using local or grant funds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Partial note on draft bill available.

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