

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1408

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to developing a definition and model for "family engagement coordinator" and other terms used interchangeably with it.

Brief Description: Concerning the development of a definition and model for "family engagement coordinator" and other terms used interchangeably with it.

Sponsors: Representatives Ortiz-Self, Magendanz, Sawyer, Santos, Senn, Robinson, Orwall, Tarleton, Bergquist and Gregerson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/2/15, 2/19/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO) to work with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Commission (EOGOAC) to recommend to the Legislature a definition for the term that is variously referred to as "family engagement coordinator," "parent and family engagement coordinator," and "parent involvement coordinator," and a model or framework for such a staff position.
- Requires the OEO and the EOGOAC to consult with certain entities in developing the model or framework.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 20 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Ortiz-Self, Vice Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Magendanz, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Stambaugh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Fagan, Gregory, Griffey, Hargrove, S. Hunt, Kilduff, Klippert, Lytton, McCaslin, Orwall, Pollet and Springer.

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

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.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

The Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO), within the Office of the Governor, was established in 2006 to be independent from the public education system. The OEO resolves complaints impartially and confidentially and works with parents, students, schools, and district staff to find collaborative solutions focusing on the student's best interest. The OEO also collects data and makes public policy recommendations, promotes family engagement in education, and identifies strategies to close the achievement gap.

The Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Commission (EOGOAC) was created in 2009 to address the achievement gap in Washington's public schools. The committee is tasked with recommending to the educational agencies specific policies and strategies to:

- support and facilitate parent and community involvement and outreach;
- enhance the cultural competency of current and future educators and the cultural relevance of curriculum and instruction;
- expand pathways and strategies to prepare and recruit diverse teachers and administrators;
- recommend current programs and resources that should be redirected to narrow the gap;
- identify data elements and systems needed to monitor progress in closing the gap;
- make closing the achievement gap part of the school and school district improvement process; and
- explore innovative school models that have shown success in closing the achievement gap.

A variety of initiatives across the state and across the country focus on encouraging parents, guardians, and families to understand and demonstrate the importance of education, to participate in their student's learning process, and to become involved in school activities. Beginning in September 2018, the prototypical school model will include funding for one "parent involvement coordinator" per prototypical elementary, middle, and high school.

A graduation coach is a staff person who works with the school counselors to identify and provide intervention services to students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school or of not graduating on time. A report published by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in 2013 describes a model policy that defines the skill sets and responsibilities of graduation coaches.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

By December 1, 2015, the OEO must collaborate with the EOGOAC to recommend to the Legislature:

- a definition for the term that is variously referred to as "family engagement coordinator," "parent and family engagement coordinator," and "parent involvement coordinator;" and
- a model or framework for such a staff position.

In developing the model or framework for the staff position, the OEO and the EOGOAC must collaborate with: the OSPI; the Washington Education Association; the Public School Employees of Washington; the Washington School Counselors' Association; the Association of Washington School Principals; and the Washington State School Directors' Association.

The section expires July 1, 2016.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

In developing the model or framework for the staff position, the OEO and the EOGOAC must collaborate with certain entities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 2015.

Effective Date of Substitute 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) This bill will address the issue that "family engagement coordinator" is listed in the prototypical school model, but this term is not defined anywhere. When families participate, their students do better. Families who are low-income often face barriers to engagement. The EOGOAC is tasked with making policies inclusive. The bill will be amended to make sure the major stakeholders are included in the collaboration. Teachers are tasked with engaging with the parents they serve, but when teachers are overburdened and when families have major needs, it is important to have someone who can coordinate resources and facilitate discussions. The positive impact of students' success on family engagement is well documented. The OEO recommended that all schools be fully funded with a family engagement coordinator. The OEO focuses on this area and is tasked with developing parental materials, educating parents with the educational system, and identifying obstacles to student success. The OEO recommends strategies to help parents participate effectively in school. The OEO's annual report cites parent concerns with their involvement as high. Every school needs a highly skilled point person to engage with families.

(In support with amendment(s)) Members should be added to the work group to collaborate with the OEO and the EOGOAC, including counselors, principals, and paraeducators. There should be flexibility left for districts to design their own job description to meet their own needs.

(In support with concerns) Students and families are coming to school with an increased need for personal, academic, emotional, and other needs. Addressing these issues is difficult with the current staffing levels. More help is needed. There should be a connection at the school for students and families who are reengaging students and families. The OEO worked with the OSPI to create a model policy to develop the skill sets for graduation coaches. Teachers and principals often visit student's homes in order to provide them with the support they need. One concern that is mostly addressed with the amendment, is that the OSPI wants to be an equal member. The graduation coaches spend much of their time engaging with families.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Ortiz- Self, prime sponsor; and Jennifer Harris, Office of the Education Ombudsman.

(In support with amendment(s)) Wendy Radar-Konofalski, Washington Education Association.

(In support with concerns) Kim Reykdal, Washington Counselor Association; Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals; and Gil Mendoza, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.