

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2671

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Human Services

Title: An act relating to the definition of agency for purposes of early learning programs.

Brief Description: Concerning the definition of "agency" for purposes of early learning programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Walsh and Stanford; by request of Department of Early Learning.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 1/26/16, 1/29/16 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the definition of "agency" to exempt school-age programs that operate in schools and meet specified requirements from licensing by the Department of Early Learning.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Senn, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hawkins, Kilduff, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Sawyer, Scott and Walkinshaw.

Staff: Ashley Paintner (786-7120).

Background:

School-age Child Care Programs.

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) oversees child care licensing for school-age children, which includes programs that operate before and after school, and during the summer and over holiday breaks. School-age child care currently serves children beginning at age 5 until they reach their twelfth birthday. The DEL serves approximately 11,800 full-time students and 24,500 part-time students through school-age child care programs.

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.

Working Connections Child Care.

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program offers subsidies to child care providers serving families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Children of families receiving the WCCC benefits are required to be less than 13 years of age or less than 19 years of age and have a verified special need or be under court supervision. In order for a school-age child care program to accept WCCC subsidies, they need to be either a licensed, certified, or DEL-contracted provider.

Summary of Bill:

The definition of "agency" is modified to exempt school-age programs from licensing by the DEL if they: (1) are operated by schools, including boarding schools; (2) are engaged primarily in education; (3) operate on a definite school year schedule; (4) follow a stated academic curriculum, and (5) accept only school-age children. The requirement that these programs cannot accept custody of children in order to be license exempt is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) One of the DEL's current goals is to increase collaboration with the K-12 system. The DEL would like to remove before- and after-school programs from their licensing responsibilities and to allow schools to provide the necessary oversight for these programs. Before- and after-school programs that are operated in schools and these schools already go through approval procedures with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Therefore, the OSPI should be responsible for before- and after-school program oversight and the DEL should concentrate its efforts on the pre-K population.

Private schools have been working with the DEL to decide who should be responsible for before- and after-school programs and how to best implement policies and procedures that make sense given that these programs are only serving school-age children. The current rule requires that in order to be exempt from licensing before- and after-school programs must not take custody of children. This rule has caused confusion with school-age program providers. The bill would remove that requirement and help clarify what programs would be exempt from child care licensing.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Frank Ordway, Department of Early Learning; Suzie Hanson, Washington Federation of Independent Schools; and Donna Christensen, Catholic Schools & Charities.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.