

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6432

As of February 3, 2016

Title: An act relating to evaluating student mental health services and providing students with skills that promote mental health and well-being and increase academic performance.

Brief Description: Making provisions to evaluate student mental health services and provide students with skills that promote mental health and well-being and increase academic performance.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, McAuliffe, Rolfes, Fain, Dammeier, Mullet, Carlyle and Darneille.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/01/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Educational Service Districts (ESDs). These regional agencies are intended to provide cooperative and informational services to local school districts and assist the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education. Washington has nine ESDs. ESDs receive funding from the state, federal and private grants, service fees, agency contracts, and cooperatives.

Current law requires ESDs to develop and maintain the capacity to offer training for educators and other school district staff on youth suicide screening and referral, and on recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students. An ESD may demonstrate capacity by employing staff with sufficient expertise to offer the training or by contracting with individuals or organizations to offer the training.

Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup. In the 2015-17 operating budget, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) was directed to convene a workgroup to recommend comprehensive benchmarks for developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning for grades kindergarten through high school that build upon what is being done in early learning. The workgroup will submit recommendations to the education committees of the Legislature, and the Office of the Governor by October 1, 2016.

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.

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). This committee conducts performance audits, program evaluations, sunset reviews, and other analyses at the direction of the Legislature.

Summary of Bill: ESD Training. Each ESD must develop and maintain the capacity to serve as a convener, trainer, and mentor for educators, administrators, and other school district staff on social and emotional learning. An ESD may demonstrate capacity by employing staff with sufficient expertise to offer the training or by contracting with individuals or organizations to offer the training.

Each ESD must offer training on social and emotional learning, beginning in the 2017-18 school year, at no cost to school districts or educators if funds are appropriated specifically for this purpose or made available through grants or other sources. An ESD may work with school districts to create a training model that works best for each school district and ESD. The training model and curricula must be based on the recommendations of the Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Workgroup.

JLARC Inventory. JLARC must conduct an inventory of the mental health service models available to students through schools, school districts, and ESDs. JLARC must report its findings to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by October 31, 2016.

JLARC must perform the inventory using data that is already collected by schools, school districts, and ESDs. It must not collect or review student-level data and must not include student-level data in the report.

The inventory and report must include information on the following:

- how many students are served by mental health services in each school, school district, or ESD;
- how many of these students are participating in Medicaid programs;
- how the mental health services are funded, including federal, state, and private sources;
- information on who provides the mental health services, including district employees and contractors; and
- any other available information related to student access and outcomes.

This section expires July 1, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The purpose of social and emotional learning is to empower students and help them navigate the complexities of the world. Social and emotional learning is an important topic for parents. In order to have a coordinated system to

respond to mental health issues, there needs to be an inventory of what is currently in place. Current school and district responses to mental health needs are piecemeal, and students can slip through the cracks. This bill is broader in scope, so it can include suicide prevention.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Sarah Butcher, Washington State PTA; Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principal.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.