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## Education Committee

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### HB 1412

**Brief Description:** Creating a pilot project to provide middle and junior high school students strategic and intentional academic support beyond the traditional school day.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Sells, Stambaugh, McCaslin, Koster, Blake, Muri, Kirby, Ortiz-Self, Hayes, Springer, McBride, Gregerson, Lovick, Haler, Harmsworth, Van Werven, Bergquist, Dent, Peterson, Klippert, Dye, Goodman, Holy, Kagi, Volz, Hargrove, Pollet, Pettigrew, Appleton, Slatter, Kloba and Dolan.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a three-year pilot project, administered by the Department of Commerce (Department), to establish learning labs in up to 10 public middle or junior high schools located throughout the state.
- Defines "learning lab" as a program that provides additional academic support to public middle or junior high school students beyond the traditional school day.
- Requires the Department to submit a report to the Governor, the appropriate committees of the Legislature and the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding the pilot project and whether it should be continued, expanded, or discontinued.
- Appropriates \$1.8 million to the Department for the administration and operation of the learning labs in fiscal years 2018, 2019, 2020.

**Hearing Date:** 1/31/17

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

#### Background:

School district boards of directors are charged with ensuring a quality education for each student in the district, and directed to establish the final curriculum standards relevant to the particular needs of district students or the unusual characteristics of the district. School district boards of directors may determine the amount of instructional hours necessary for a student to acquire a

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quality education in the district, provided the number of hours is not less than state requirements. School district boards of directors also have discretion over the configuration of grade levels and program offerings in schools.

The terms "middle school" and "junior high school" are used in statute but are not defined in statutory provisions governing public schools. However, administrative rules adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) specify that the term "*middle school level*" means grades 5 or 6 through grade 8, and that the term "*junior high level*" means grades 7-9, except that it may mean grades 7 and 8 in a school district where high school encompasses grades 9-12, or grades 8 and 9 in a district that chooses to include grade seven in a middle school.

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Department) was created in 2009 as a successor agency to the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development. The Department is a cabinet-level state agency with the mission to grow and improve jobs in Washington. The Department is charged with enhancing and promoting sustainable communities and economic vitality in Washington, and administers a portfolio of more than 100 programs and several state boards and commissions.

### **Summary of Bill:**

A pilot project is established to create a limited number of learning labs throughout the state in public middle and junior high schools. The pilot project must commence at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year and conclude at the end of the 2019-20 school year. The purpose of the pilot project is to provide students with an organized and consistent learning environment to support them in meeting or exceeding grade-level standards, obtaining the skills to be successful high school students, and being well prepared for postsecondary education.

An academic support entity, a tax exempt entity defined as meeting specified requirements, is charged with implementing the pilot project in up to 10 public middle or junior high schools strategically placed within the state. Schools participating in the project must agree to partner with the academic support entity.

Definitions are established for several key terms related to the pilot project. For example:

- "Learning lab" is defined as a program that provides additional academic support to public middle or junior high school students beyond the traditional school day. A learning lab must be housed in a room with computer access and must be led by a lab director.
- "Lab director" is defined as a part-time independent contractor who has teaching experience or the equivalent. The lab director must supervise and is responsible for the learning lab.

Each school participating in the pilot project must, with limited exceptions, have a learning lab that is open to students from after school until 6:00 p.m. each day that school is in session. Each participating school must also have a lab director. The lab director must be contracted with district input, and trained and supported by the academic support entity that implements the pilot project. The required training must address specific topics, including:

- involving parents and guardians;
- monitoring grades and state test scores;

- recruiting and training learning lab volunteers; and
- teaming with students, parents, and teachers.

The Department of Commerce (Department) is charged with administering the pilot project. No more than 4 percent of the funding provided for the pilot project may be used by the Department for administrative purposes.

The Department, in collaboration with the academic support entity that implements the pilot project, must submit a report regarding the pilot project to the Governor, the appropriate committees of the Legislature, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The report must be submitted by December 1, 2020, and must include a recommendation on whether the pilot project should be continued, expanded, or discontinued.

Provisions authorizing and governing the pilot project expire June 30, 2021.

**Appropriation:** The sum of \$600,000 is appropriated to the Department of Commerce for each of the following fiscal years: 2018, 2019, and 2020.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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