
Education Committee

HB 1518

Brief Description: Improving student achievement by promoting social emotional learning throughout the calendar year.

Sponsors: Representatives Senn, Stambaugh, Lovick, Stonier, Harris, Slatter, Kilduff, Nealey, Caldier, Clibborn, Ortiz-Self, Haler, Kloba, Pollet, Orwall, Doglio, Kagi, Fitzgibbon, Goodman, Bergquist, Hudgins, Ormsby, Stanford and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that the Department of Early Learning contract for up to an additional 600 summer Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program slots at certain priority school buildings.
- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a work group to build upon the social emotional learning (SEL) benchmarks developed in 2016, and provides a list of members and duties for the work group.
- Establishes a competitive grant program to increase the number of summer learning programs that combine academics and SEL, and specifies application criteria and reporting requirements for the program.

Hearing Date: 2/13/17

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Social and Emotional Learning. In 2010 the Department of Early Learning, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and Thrive by Five Washington reviewed and revised the early learning and development benchmarks, which they published as the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines. These guidelines include information about social and emotional learning (SEL) and development for parents, teachers, and other adults who support children in grades kindergarten through grade 3.

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.

The 2015 operating budget (i.e., Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6052, enacted as Chapter 4 Laws of 2015, 3rd Special Session) directed the OSPI to convene a work group to recommend comprehensive benchmarks for developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of SEL for grades kindergarten through high school that build upon what is being done in early learning. As required, the work group reported its recommendations on October 1, 2016. The work group recommended that the Legislature, with guidance and support from OSPI:

- adopt the proposed SEL framework, including the guiding principals, standards, and benchmarks for kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students in Washington; and
- continue to fund the SEL Benchmarks Work Group as a state-level advisory committee.

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. The state preschool program is called the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). The stated goal of the ECEAP is to help ensure children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Children are eligible for ECEAP if they are from families with annual incomes at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level – \$26,730 for a family of four, qualify for school district special education services, or have developmental or environmental risk factors that could affect school success. Although the ECEAP prioritizes children who are 4 years old, children who are 3 years old are also eligible for the program.

Approved ECEAPs receive state-funded support through the DEL. Public or private nonsectarian organizations, including school districts, community and technical colleges, local governments, and nonprofit organizations may contract with the DEL to become an ECEAP provider. Out of 365 ECEAP classrooms, 196 are in public schools.

Over 11,600 ECEAP slots are currently funded. Most slots are in school-year programs, with full day slots providing at least 1,000 hours per year and part day slots providing at least 320 hours per year. There are about 550 year-around slots, called extended slots. The February 2017 forecast indicates that nearly 19,000 children will be eligible for ECEAP by the 2020-21 school year, when the program becomes an entitlement.

Summer Food Service Program. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a Child Nutrition Program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The SFSP provides reimbursement for nutritious meals served to children in lower income areas at no cost when school is out. Meals must be served in low-income communities where at least 50 percent of children are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals or in other locations where at least 50 percent of the children enrolled in a specific program are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

In Washington, the OSPI administers the program. Public or private non-profit organizations (schools, tribal organizations, summer camps, higher education institutions, etc.) may apply to the OSPI to sponsor a SFSP. Sponsors receive federal reimbursement from the OSPI to cover the administrative and operating costs of preparing and serving meals to eligible children at one or more meal sites.

Summary of Bill:

The act may be known and cited as the Summer Step-Up Act.

Summer Early Learning Programs. Subject to funding appropriated by the Legislature, by March 1, 2018, the DEL must contract for up to an additional 600 summer ECEAP slots at K-12 school building sites, distributed across the state. The DEL must give priority to summer ECEAP operated in school buildings that:

1. plan to include four-year old children;
2. are in low-income areas or areas underserved by early childhood education programs; and
3. plan to fund summer meals using reimbursements from the USDA or other nonstate sources.

By October 1, 2019, the DEL must submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature that includes recommendations for continuing, modifying, or expiring the program, and that describes:

- how many summer ECEAP slots were funded;
- participant's school readiness outcomes compared to children that did not receive the summer school programming;
- lessons learned in combining academics and SEL in summer ECEAP; and
- lessons learned in funding summer meals using reimbursements from the USDA or other nonstate sources.

Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks Work Group. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must convene a work group to build upon the 2016 SEL Benchmarks Work Group. The work group must include:

- the members of the original SEL Benchmarks Work Group;
- representatives of the state ethnic commissions, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, federally recognized tribes and urban tribal centers, an organization that specifically works to close the educational opportunity gap, grassroots organizations engaged with communities of color, and an organization that works with immigrant populations; and
- experts in SEL curriculum development, early childhood development, and adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed care.

First, the work group must identify and articulate developmental indicators for every grade level for each of the six benchmarks described in the 2016 SEL report. These indicators must be culturally inclusive and responsive, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with the 2016 SEL report. Feedback from stakeholders and experts across the state on the SEL benchmarks and indicators must be solicited and incorporated into the benchmarks and indicators.

Next, the work group must develop a model of best practices for educators, schools, districts, and families to monitor students' social emotional development and progress, and communicate this information to students' families. The model must not stigmatize or label individual students, not place one set of cultural norms or practices above another, be developmentally appropriate, and not be used as a state assessment or learning standard, nor affect students' grades.

The work group must also develop guidance for schools, school districts, and educators in promoting developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of SEL throughout the calendar year that is:

- culturally competent;
- linguistically appropriate;

- provides a positive learning environment for students;
- is inclusive of parental involvement;
- promotes school safety and a positive school climate;
- includes best practices in assisting students through high school transitions between elementary, middle, and high school; and
- incorporates best practices to address the mental health continuum of children, from mental well-being and mental health to mental illness, and acknowledges research around adverse childhood experiences.

In addition, the work group must provide technical advice on how developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of SEL fits within existing teacher and principle evaluations, particularly as it relates to school safety and school climate. The work group must also create a state implementation plan that provides a framework for incorporating, and aligning, SEL with other Washington education initiatives, including college and career readiness, STEM education, twenty-first century skills, and the state learning standards. Finally, by September 1, 2019, the work group must submit a report to the Legislature, the Governor, and the SPI that details the work group's activities. The work group expires on July 1, 2020.

Duties of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. To inform the work of the SEL Work Group, the OSPI must survey schools to:

- ascertain how many schools in the state are teaching interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of SEL; and
- understand individual districts' capacity to implement the SEL benchmarks and indicators.

The SPI must select and employ a SEL technical advisor to assist and advise schools in implementing SEL programs throughout the calendar year. The SPI must also adopt, periodically update, and post on its web site, SEL developmental benchmarks and indicators, best practices, and guidance, based on the recommendations of the SEL Work Group.

Summer Step-Up Grant Program. The Summer Step-Up Grant Program is established to increase the number of summer learning programs that combine academics and SEL. The OSPI must develop and administer the competitive grant program.

By March 1, 2018, the OSPI must award two-year grants to summer learning programs that are at least four weeks in length, for any of grades K-12 that agree to create or expand summer learning programs that combine academics and SEL. The OSPI must establish criteria to evaluate applicants, and require applicants to describe: the number and grade levels of the students that grant money will serve; how the summer learning program will combine academics and SEL; and how summer meals will be funded, including whether meals will be reimbursed by the USDA or other nonstate sources. In awarding grant money, the OSPI must give priority to applicants that plan to fund summer meals using reimbursements from the USDA or other nonstate sources.

By October 1, 2019, the SPI submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature that recommends whether to continue, modify, or expire the summer step-up grant program, and describes:

- how many students were supported during the summer learning programs funded by the Summer Step-Up Grants;
- lessons learned in combining academics and SEL in summer learning programs; and
- lessons learned in funding summer meals using reimbursements from the USDA or other nonstate sources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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