

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 2811

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to establishing a statewide environmental sustainability education program.

Brief Description: Establishing a statewide environmental sustainability education program.

Sponsors: Representatives J. Johnson, Steele, Santos, Ramel, Thai, Mead, Frame, Davis, Valdez, Bergquist, Doglio, Kirby, Lovick, Tarleton, Dolan, Goodman, Gregerson, Slatter, Macri, Hudgins, Pollet, Ryu and Stonier.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 1/30/20, 2/3/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/20, 91-6.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/6/20, 48-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to provide state leadership for the integration of environmental and sustainability content with curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Requires the OSPI to contract with a Washington state-based nonprofit organization to integrate the state learning standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science with the FieldSTEM model of outdoor field studies and project-based and work-based learning opportunities that are aligned with the environmental, natural resources, and agricultural sectors.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, 1st Vice Chair; Bergquist, 2nd Vice Chair; Chopp, Cody, Dolan, Fitzgibbon, Hudgins, Kilduff, Macri, Pettigrew, Pollet, Ryu, Senn, Springer, Sullivan, Tarleton and Tharinger.

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.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Rude, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chandler, Corry, Dye, Hoff, Kraft, Mosbrucker, Schmick, Sutherland and Ybarra.

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

Staff: Jordan Clarke (786-7123).

Background:

State Learning Standards and Curriculum.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is responsible for developing and revising the state learning standards that identify the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be able to do based on basic education learning goals established by the Legislature. The SPI is also responsible for adopting student learning standards aligned to the state learning standards as grade-level content expectations. School districts must teach content aligned to the state learning standards when the content area is required or offered, but districts do not ratify or formally adopt the standards, as curriculum choices are, with limited exceptions, determined by school districts.

Environment and Sustainability Education Learning Standards.

In 2009 the SPI adopted the Washington State K-12 Integrated Environmental and Sustainability Education Learning Standards ("ESE learning standards"). The ESE learning standards address the following areas:

- Standard 1: Ecological, Social, and Economic Systems.
- Standard 2: The Natural and Built Environment.
- Standard 3: Sustainability and Civic Responsibility.

The ESE learning standards describe what students should know and be able to do to be environmentally and sustainability literate and are intended to be integrated into core content areas and across all grade levels. In 2014 the ESE learning standards were updated to reflect the adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards and the Common Core State Standards.

FieldSTEM Learning.

FieldSTEM learning is project-based learning that takes place in outdoor learning environments focused on FieldSTEM studies and work experiences. In 2015 the Washington State Legislature appropriated funding for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to contract with a nonprofit organization to develop and implement FieldSTEM learning activities, lessons, and work experiences utilizing Washington's environmental, natural resources, and agricultural sectors. In 2019 the Legislature appropriated funding for the OSPI to continue to contract with a nonprofit organization to develop, implement, and provide professional learning for Washington kindergarten through grade 12 educators in FieldSTEM education.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must provide state leadership for the integration of environmental and sustainability content with curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Subject to appropriations, the OSPI must contract with a Washington-based nonprofit organization to integrate the state learning standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science with the FieldSTEM model of outdoor field studies and project-based and work-based learning opportunities aligned with the environmental, natural resources, and agricultural sectors.

The nonprofit organization must work with the OSPI to: build programming that connects administrators, school boards, and communities to support teacher practice and student educational opportunities; support educators to teach students environmental science and engineering outdoors that is aligned with ESE learning standards; and create and deliver learning materials, educational and work-based opportunities, and resources to students, educators, and the community. The nonprofit organization must also provide models for integrating Since Time Immemorial in teaching materials. The OSPI must prioritize schools that have been identified for improvement through the Washington School Improvement Framework and communities historically underserved by science education.

The Washington-based nonprofit organization must have a least 15 years of experience providing educator professional development in FieldSTEM fields, have materials and instructional practices that align with the ESE learning standards and emphasize the Next Generation Science Standards to support field-based learning experiences, and deliver project-based learning materials and resources that incorporate career connections and contain professional development support for educators.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

The Senate amendment: requires that the OSPI contract with a qualified nonprofit on a competitive basis; removes references to the FieldSTEM model; and modifies the definition of a "qualified nonprofit" to require multiple years of experience in providing certain services, as opposed to at least 15 years of experience.

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) There is value and opportunity in Washington when students learn about natural resources, especially for those from both rural and urban areas. This program would help students connect with higher education institutions as well as their communities. The advantages of having a program like this is the opportunity to work with a diverse group of stakeholders. This will empower educators to teach real world science outdoors and show students that there are still opportunities in rural areas to work outside. This is important in a state where a majority of businesses are in the technology field.

The human race has caused destruction of the natural environment over the last few decades, and this bill is important because it would help students who have grown up in urban settings connect more directly to the environment. The program is underfunded, and would succeed more if additional funding was provided. Access to outdoor educational opportunities helps students grow and learn more about their communities. These opportunities can change lives.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Johnson, prime sponsor; Kathryn Kurtz, Pacific Education Institute; Gareth Waugh, Port Blakely; Dana Briggs; and Chiara S'Angelo, Kitsap Youth Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.