
Education Committee

SSB 6105

Brief Description: Concerning the administration of state education agencies.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Hunt, Saldaña and Wilson, C.; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to designate a person to serve on behalf of the SPI on the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Board of Natural Resources, and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.
- Transfers various duties related to the conduct of elections for educational service district board members from the SPI to either the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) or the Executive Director of the WSSDA.
- Eliminates the school facilities citizen advisory panel created by the State Board of Education and modifies provisions authorizing the SPI to convene a technical advisory group to provide advice on school facilities issues.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matters pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and its office has numerous and broad responsibilities prescribed in statute.

The SPI also has ex officio duties, including membership on numerous state boards and commissions. Certain statutory provisions require the SPI to serve as board or commission member, while others allow a designee of the SPI to occupy the position. For example, the SPI

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must serve on the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Board of Natural Resources, and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, but a designee of the SPI may serve on the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board, and the Washington State Charter School Commission.

State Board of Education.

With origins predating statehood, the 16-member State Board of Education (SBE) is comprised of five members elected by geographic regions by school board directors, one member elected by private school directors, seven members appointed by the Governor, the SPI, and two non-voting student members.

The powers and duties of the SBE include:

- providing advocacy and strategic oversight of public education;
- identifying scores students must meet to achieve standard on statewide assessments;
- establishing high school graduation requirements or equivalencies; and
- adopting and revising academic performance improvement goals.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is responsible for conducting elections for members of the SBE that are elected by school board directors and private school directors. This responsibility includes adopting rules for the conduct of the elections.

Educational Service Districts.

Washington has nine regionally-based educational service districts (ESDs) that provide cooperative informational services to local districts and assist the OSPI and the SBE in the performance of their duties. In addition to providing the cooperative and informational services, the ESDs also serve as a depository and distribution center for instructional materials, and assist districts in the preparation of their budgets. The OSPI and the SBE are authorized in statute to delegate otherwise assigned programs projects and services to the ESD.

The ESDs are governed by seven or nine-member boards that are elected by school directors within each ESD. The SPI is the recipient of declarations of candidacy for the ESD boards and is responsible for calling elections for the ESD elections in odd-numbered years. The SPI is also responsible for establishing election boards to count and tally votes for ESD board positions and for certifying the results.

Washington State School Directors' Association.

Established by statute, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is the state agency that provides advice and assistance to local school boards. The WSSDA is charged with coordinating policymaking, control, and management of the state's school districts. Among other actions, the WSSDA adopts model policies and procedures, often in response to legislative directives, that school districts may adopt.

School Facilities Citizen Advisory Panel.

The SBE is directed by statute to create a school facilities citizen advisory panel (advisory panel) to advise and make recommendations to the SPI regarding school facilities, funding for school construction, joint planning and financing of educational facilities, facility plans and programs for nonhigh school districts, and determinations of remote and necessary schools.

The membership of the advisory panel is as follows:

- one member of the SBE;
- two school district directors representing school districts of various sizes and geographic locations who are appointed by the SBE from a list of names submitted by the WSSDA; and
- four additional citizen members appointed by the SBE.

Provisions establishing the advisory panel and prescribing its duties also authorize the SPI to convene a technical advisory group including representatives from school business officers, building and construction contracting and trade organizations, architecture and engineering organizations, and other organizations with expertise in school facilities.

Summary of Bill:

The SPI is authorized to designate a person to serve on behalf of the SPI on the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Board of Natural Resources, and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.

Responsibilities for the conduct of elections for educational service district board members, including the adoption of rules, the calling of elections, the receipt of candidate filing statements, and the tabulation and certification of election results are transferred from the SPI to either the WSSDA or the Executive Director of the WSSDA.

The advisory panel created by the SBE is eliminated and provisions prescribing its membership and duties are repealed.

Provisions governing a technical advisory group (advisory group) that the SPI may convene are modified. The SPI is authorized to convene an advisory group to advise the SPI on issues pertaining to school facilities and funding for school construction. Recommendation duties that were previously assigned to the advisory panel (regarding school facilities; funding for school construction; joint planning and financing of educational facilities; facility plans and programs for nonhigh school districts; and determinations of remote and necessary schools), are transferred to the advisory group. The advisory group is expressly required to include citizen members, and members of the advisory group may be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with associated requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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