

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESSB 6189

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning eligibility for school employees' benefits board coverage.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Mullet, Pedersen, Zeiger, Kuderer, Das, Short and Wilson, C.).

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** In 2017, EHB 2242 was enacted, consolidating healthcare benefits for all eligible school employees under the School Employees' Benefits (SEB) Board. The SEB Board is responsible for determining the terms of employee and dependent eligibility and enrollment policies, subject to the condition that employees anticipated to work at least 630 hours per year qualify for coverage.

In 2018, ESSB 6241 was enacted, which included various provisions related to the administration of the benefits, including a requirement that school employers make contributions for employee health care even when the employee has waived coverage. The same provision exists under the Public Employees' Benefits (PEB) Board.

Benefits under SEB began January 1, 2020.

**Summary:** The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee will conduct a study to identify the number and types of part-time employees and their eligibility for SEB Board benefits. The report is due to the Legislature by September 1, 2021.

The Health Care Authority must analyze the impacts of changes to the requirement that school employers remit premiums for employees who waive medical coverage. The analysis is due to the Legislature by September 1, 2021.

When school districts report annually to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction on data related to substitute teachers they must include the hours worked by each substitute and the number who were eligible for SEB Board benefits.

Beginning with the 2022 plan year, dual coverage under the SEB Board and benefits provided under the PEB Board is prohibited for the same type of coverage. The SEB and PEB boards shall adopt policies to reflect this single enrollment requirement.

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*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.*

School employees' eligibility for benefits provided by the SEB Board is maintained for the remainder of the school year if, during the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) declared state of emergency, the employee would otherwise lose eligibility because of a school closure or changes in operation; an employee is quarantined or required to care for a family member; or an employee must take care of a child during a school, day care, or child care provider closure.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	47	1	
House	97	0	(House amended)
			(Senate refused to concur)
House	97	0	(House receded/amended)
Senate	45	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** March 17, 2020