

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6615

As of February 4, 2020

Title: An act relating to staff funding for school districts.

Brief Description: Concerning staff funding for school districts.

Sponsors: Senator Wellman; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/05/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adjusts the values of prototypical elementary, middle, and high schools to be 500 students each.
- Phases in reduced class sizes, including additional reduced values for high poverty schools.
- Phases in increased minimum allocation amounts for staff and adds a new position titled "continuous improvement coaches."
- Phases in increased minimum allocation amounts for district wide support services.
- Phases in funding for professional learning days for all state-funded school staff.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: Prototypical School Model. The state's public school funding model allocates funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support a prototypical school serving an assumed number of students at defined elementary, middle, and high schools levels. The use of prototypical schools is intended to illustrate the level of resources needed to operate a school of a particular size using commonly understood terms such as class size, hours of instruction, and specified staff positions.

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 structure of the formula, which appears in statute, provides allocations for classroom teachers at an assumed class size, plus other building-level staff such as principals, teacher-librarians, counselors, and office support. Based on these staffing ratios, the state uses salary assumptions for each of the different staff types to generate state funding allocations. The funding provided to school districts through the prototypical school formulas is for allocation purposes only, and districts have discretion over how the money is spent, subject to some limits.

Professional Learning Days. State law defines professional learning as a comprehensive, sustained, job-embedded, and collaborative approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement. Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, the Legislature must begin phasing in funding for professional learning days for certificated instructional staff, beginning with a minimum of one professional learning day in 2018-19, two professional learning days in 2019-20, and three professional learning days in 2020-21.

Staffing Enrichment Work Group. In 2017, the Legislature passed EHB 2242 directing the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a technical work group, composed of representatives of diverse school districts and education stakeholders. This work group was directed to review staffing enrichments to the program of basic education and make recommendations to the Legislature on a possible phase-in plan of staffing enrichments, specifically enrichments that are evidence-based strategies for reducing the opportunity gap, assisting struggling students, enhancing the educational outcomes for all students, or strengthening support for all school and district staff. The work group issued its report to the Legislature in December 2019.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Prototypical School Model. Within the prototypical school funding model, the definitions of prototypical schools are adjusted so that each high school, middle school, and elementary school has 500 average annual full-time equivalent students.

Decreased class size values within the prototypical model must be phased in by 2025-26. High poverty schools, defined as those in which the three-year rolling average free and reduced price lunch percentage exceeds 50 percent, have further reduced class sizes under the prototypical model. Career and technical class sizes and skill center class sizes are reduced for certain grade ranges.

Minimum allocations for elementary, middle, and high school staff positions are increased over a phased in schedule that must be completed by the 2025-26 school year. The term "guidance counselor" is changed to "school counselor" and the term "teaching assistance" is changed to "paraeducators." A new staff role titled "continuous improvement coaches" is added to the list of staff and assigned new minimum allocation values under the prototypical school model.

By the 2025-26 school year the minimum allocations for district-wide support services must be increased according to newly provided values.

Professional Learning Days. Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, the Legislature must begin phasing in funding for professional learning days for all state-funded school staff in equal, annual increments. The professional learning days should be job-embedded and align with professional learning standards. A significant portion of the professional learning days must include topics of racial literacy and cultural responsiveness, and the content must be evidence-based, build on prior learning, and allow for local flexibility in content delivery.

Before the 2022-23 school year, the state must allocate funding for a minimum of the following:

- six days for certificated instructional staff;
- six days for classified staff; and
- three days for certificated administrative instructional staff.

Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, and before the 2025-26 school year, the state must allocate a minimum of ten professional learning days for all state-funded school staff.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2020.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2020.