
Education Committee

ESSB 5878

Brief Description: Clarifying visual and performing arts instruction.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Wellman, Hunt, Lovick, Nobles and Wilson, C.).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Adds visual and performing arts to the list of subjects in which school districts and state-tribal compact schools must instruct students.
- Requires public schools to offer regular instruction in at least one visual art or at least one performing art, according to specified requirements, beginning with the 2023-24 school year.

Hearing Date: 2/18/22

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194)

Background:

State Learning Standards. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) adopts state learning standards that describe what public school students must know and be able to do at each grade level. Public schools are the common schools within school districts, charter schools, state-tribal compact schools, and other publicly funded institutions of learning with a curriculum below college level. The state learning standards for art include five disciplines: dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. These standards are arranged under four artistic processes for each discipline: creating, performing/presenting/producing, responding, and connecting.

Instruction and Graduation Requirements. School districts and state-tribal compact schools must instruct students in specified subjects, for example reading, arithmetic, and science. The

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Superintendent may prescribe other required subjects by rule. Among other requirements, to qualify for graduation from a public high school, students must complete 24 credits, including at least one credit in visual or performing arts aligned to the state learning standards.

Teacher Requirements. An endorsement is the subject area in which a certificated teacher is authorized to teach, along with designated grade levels for that area. There are endorsements available for: dance, music, theater arts, and visual arts. Certificated teachers with endorsements can be assigned to teach outside of their endorsement area if approved by the local school board and a written plan of assistance is developed to provide the teacher with a reasonable amount of planning and study time associated specifically with the out-of-endorsement assignment.

Career and technical education (CTE) courses, some of which may be deemed equivalent to art courses, must be taught by teachers with CTE certificates. Some CTE teachers may also have endorsements on their certificate.

Summary of Bill:

Instruction Requirements. Visual and performing arts are added to the list of subjects in which common and state-tribal compact schools must instruct students. Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, public schools must offer regular instruction in at least one visual art or at least one performing art, throughout the academic school year. Students in kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) must receive instruction in at least one arts discipline throughout their K-8 education experience. Students in grades nine through twelve must be given the opportunity to take arts coursework each academic year.

Arts instruction must take place during the regular school day, with instruction time for these courses being equal to instruction time devoted to other core subject areas. Arts instruction must be solely for the arts discipline in the skills and craft of each specific arts discipline as their own end, rather than as a vehicle to enhance learning in any other nonarts subject area. If schools wish to integrate or infuse the arts into other subject matter, they must do so in addition to the regular, formal arts instruction required by this section.

Arts instructors in each school district, as subject matter experts, must be consulted and given an equal part in the decision process to determine which specific visual and performing arts courses to offer at given grade levels, so that instruction is properly aligned to students' developmental stages and vertically aligned to give arts-focused students the best chance for success in their arts college or career pathway.

Teacher Requirements. Instruction for the arts courses must be given by qualified dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts specialists in the area being taught. These instructors may be a staff member hired solely for the purpose of teaching arts courses or existing staff members who have attained the necessary training and endorsements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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