
HOUSE BILL 2078

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Rule, Barkis, Ryu, Fitzgibbon, Simmons, Shewmake, Berry, Leavitt, Berg, Senn, Callan, Dent, J. Johnson, Kloba, Bergquist, Chambers, Wicks, Orwall, Tharinger, Taylor, Klippert, and Pollet

Read first time 01/21/22. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the outdoor school for all
2 program; amending RCW 28A.300.790 and 28A.320.173; adding a new
3 section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that time
6 outdoors helps children thrive physically, emotionally, and
7 academically, yet over the past few generations, childhood has moved
8 indoors. On average, today's kids spend up to 44 hours per week in
9 front of a screen, and less than 10 minutes a day doing activities
10 outdoors. For too many kids, access to the outdoors is determined by
11 race, income, ability, and zip code. All children deserve equitable
12 access to outdoor spaces where they can learn, play, and grow.
13 Current access to outdoor school is inequitable mostly due to funding
14 and administrative constraints.

15 (2) From stress reduction to improved focus and engagement to
16 better academic performance, outdoor-based learning helps kids
17 thrive. Research shows participants in outdoor school have higher
18 graduation rates, improved behavior in school and relationships with
19 peers, higher academic achievement, critical thinking skills, direct
20 experience of scientific concepts in the field, leadership and
21 collaboration skills, and a deeper engagement with learning, place,

1 and community. Outdoor school also offers new opportunities for
2 career connected learning in science, natural resources, education,
3 land management, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and other
4 employment sectors. Outdoor school can also be a key element in the
5 larger system of regular outdoor instructional time and outdoor
6 experiences that includes STEM fields, after-school programs, summer
7 camps, 4-H, scouting, and related programs that can spark a lifelong
8 appreciation for the natural world.

9 (3) The legislature further finds that accessibility is a major
10 obstacle to universal outdoor school. Most sites lack accommodation
11 for children with disabilities and support staff for children who
12 need social and emotional support. In addition, some youth may
13 experience cultural barriers to outdoor school experiences. The
14 legislature intends to establish a statewide program to address all
15 these needs and to ensure all students have a chance to benefit from
16 outdoor school.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) Within amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, or
20 within funding made available, the outdoor school for all program is
21 established. The purpose of the outdoor school for all program is to
22 develop and support outdoor school experiences for all 5th or 6th
23 grade students in Washington public schools with opportunities for
24 high school students to volunteer as counselors. The program will
25 consist of hands-on outdoor school experiences that are three to five
26 days and zero to four nights, residential or day programs, and have a
27 focus on environmental education aligned with the Washington state
28 learning standards and the development of social and emotional
29 learning skills.

30 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
31 administer the outdoor school for all program in accordance with this
32 section.

33 (3) (a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may
34 work with a statewide nonprofit organization representing school
35 principals to create guidelines for the outdoor school for all
36 program.

37 (b) Within existing resources, the Washington state parks and
38 recreation commission, the department of natural resources, the
39 Washington department of fish and wildlife, the Washington department

1 of agriculture, and the Washington conservation commission may
2 partner with the office of the superintendent of public instruction
3 for expertise on land management and career connected learning.

4 (4) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
5 award grants to eligible school districts and outdoor school
6 providers starting in the 2022-23 school year. The office may consult
7 with the Washington recreation and conservation office on outdoor
8 school grants.

9 (a) The outdoor school for all program will consist of two types
10 of grants including:

11 (i) Allocation-based grants for school districts to develop or
12 support outdoor school experiences; and

13 (ii) Competitive grants for outdoor school providers designed to
14 support existing capacity and to increase future capacity for outdoor
15 school experiences.

16 (b) School districts and outdoor school providers should ensure
17 equitable access for students in all geographic regions and high
18 levels of accessibility for students with disabilities.

19 (5) The office of the superintendent of public instruction will
20 submit an annual report, beginning in 2024, to the appropriate
21 committees of the legislature with an evaluation of the outdoor
22 school for all program and may include reporting on all outdoor
23 education and instructional time efforts and how they integrate with
24 the outdoor school for all program.

25 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.300.790 and 2018 c 266 s 410 are each amended to
26 read as follows:

27 (1) The superintendent of public instruction, subject to
28 conformity with application or other requirements adopted by rule,
29 shall approve requests by public schools as provided in RCW
30 28A.320.173 to consider student participation in seasonal or
31 nonseasonal outdoor-based activities, including the outdoor school
32 for all program established in section 2 of this act, as
33 instructional days for the purposes of basic education requirements
34 established in RCW 28A.150.220(5).

35 (2) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules to
36 implement this section.

37 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.320.173 and 2018 c 266 s 409 are each amended to
38 read as follows:

1 (1) Public schools may develop curricula that:
2 (a) Links student learning with engagement in seasonal or
3 nonseasonal outdoor-based activities, including activities related to
4 academic requirements in science, health and fitness, ~~((and))~~ career
5 and technical education, and the outdoor school for all program
6 established in section 2 of this act;
7 (b) Aligns with the ~~((essential—academic))~~ state learning
8 ~~((requirements))~~ standards under RCW 28A.655.070 that are a component
9 of the state's instructional program of basic education; and
10 (c) Includes locally administered competency based assessments
11 that align with the Washington state learning standards.
12 (2) Public schools that develop curricula under this section may
13 request authorization from the superintendent of public instruction
14 as provided in RCW 28A.300.790 to consider student participation in
15 seasonal or nonseasonal outdoor-based activities as instructional
16 days for the purposes of basic education requirements established in
17 RCW 28A.150.220(5).

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