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**HOUSE BILL 1935**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Bergquist, McEntire, Ryu, Ramel, Reed, Ormsby, Doglio, Paul, Hackney, and Pollet

AN ACT Relating to promoting resource conservation practices that include student education and leadership opportunities in public schools; adding new sections to chapter 28A.300 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that resource conservation practices can have broad application and value in Washington's public schools, especially if students are active participants in the programs and have appropriate education and leadership opportunities.

(2) The legislature finds also that when resource conservation practices in schools are partnered with other legislative actions, such as funding provided through the department of commerce for energy retrofits, energy efficiency, and solar panel installations, the resulting environmental benefits are compounded.

(3) The legislature further finds that increasing child-accessible tree canopy on school campuses can offer shade and protection to students from extreme heat and rising temperatures due to climate change, while also reducing increased indoor temperatures and associated cooling costs.

(4) The legislature, therefore, intends to create new and expanded opportunities for student-involved resource conservation practices in public schools through the establishment of a voluntary green schools program and associated grants.

(5) The legislature intends also for the department of commerce, to the extent practicable, when providing funds to school districts through energy grant programs funded in the capital budget, to prioritize school districts that are participating in the Washington state green schools program established in section 2 of this act.

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

(1) The Washington state green schools program is established in the office of the superintendent of public instruction to create and expand resource conservation practices in public schools, including: Waste reduction, energy reduction, water conservation, urban forestry education, and environmental preservation; and education and leadership opportunities for students seeking to promote conservation practices in their schools. The program is voluntary and is intended to:

(a) Compliment resource conservation programs for school districts and public schools that are established by counties or other entities by, in part, providing increased opportunities for student education and leadership in resource conservation practices;

(b) Provide opportunities for school districts and public schools that cannot access or are not participating in resource conservation programs to establish and promote resource conservation programs that include student education and leadership opportunities;

(c) Support instruction in climate curriculum aligned with the state learning standards for science and integrated environmental and sustainability; and

(d) Provide opportunities for school districts and public schools to collaborate with the department of natural resources for the purposes of schoolyard greening projects, schoolyard forests, and career-connected learning related to natural resource job opportunities within the national forest school forest system network and other urban forestry projects.

(2) For the purposes of this section, "public school" has the same meaning as in RCW 28A.150.010.

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

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall establish and administer a grant program to provide assistance to school districts for the purpose of creating or expanding resource conservation practices in accordance with section 2 of this act.

(2) School districts that participate in the Washington state green schools program established in section 2 of this act may, on forms developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction, apply for:

(a) Annual project grants of up to $15,000 per school, per year, in furtherance of the Washington state green schools program. Applications for grants awarded in accordance with this subsection (2)(a) must demonstrate student involvement through a student-based team, group, or club in the selection and support of projects proposed for funding; and

(b) Grants for stipend funds for school-based advisors that assist students in learning about, promoting, and implementing resource conservation practices in school facilities. Stipend funds provided in accordance with this section may not exceed $600 per school, per year, but nothing in this section prevents school districts from providing additional funding for school-based advisors.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "school districts" include school districts, charter schools established under chapter 28A.710 RCW, and state-tribal education compact schools subject to chapter 28A.715 RCW.

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