

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1692

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Relations

Title: An act relating to increasing youth engagement in the legislative process by creating student advisory groups to examine issues important to youth.

Brief Description: Creating student advisory groups.

Sponsors: Representatives Bergquist, Christian, Gregerson, Santos, Pollet, Macri and Simmons.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/8/23, 2/15/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a nonpartisan Legislative District Student Council, composed of 11 student members, in each legislative district to serve as advisory bodies and examine and make recommendations on issues affecting youth and education.
- Requires the Washington State Student Directors' Association to form a Student Representative Network (Network), composed of all student board representatives in the state, to examine issues important to youth and engage student school board representatives in the legislative process.
- Requires the Legislative Youth Advisory Council to organize, in coordination with the Network, an annual in-person day of youth civic education in Olympia.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Signed by 6 members: Representatives Ramos, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Christian, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Low and Mena.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Abbarno, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) is a nonpartisan youth-led committee of 22 student members created in statute to examine issues of importance to youth, including issues relating to education, employment, strategies to increase youth participation in state and municipal government, safe environments for youth, substance abuse, emotional and physical health, foster care, poverty, and youth access to services on a statewide and municipal basis. The LYAC is responsible for:

- advising the Legislature, commissions, and task forces on proposed and pending legislation and policy matters relating to youth;
- conducting periodic seminars for its members regarding leadership, government, and the Legislature;
- accepting and soliciting grants and donations to support its activities; and
- reporting annually to the Legislature on its activities, including proposed legislation that implements recommendations of the LYAC.

On its own accord, the LYAC organizes the largest youth civic engagement event at the State Capitol each year, known as Action Day, which brings students from all over the state to Olympia to engage with the legislative process. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor provides administration, supervision, and facilitation support to the LYAC, and in doing so, may collaborate with the Washington State Leadership Board.

Washington State School Directors' Association.

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) was created in statute for the coordination of policymaking, control, and management among the school districts to increase the efficiency of the common school system. The school board members of each school district in the state are members of the WSSDA. The WSSDA has various responsibilities, some of which include:

- conducting studies and disseminating information relative to increased efficiency in local school board administration;
- providing advice and assistance to local boards;
- making available on a cost reimbursable contract basis, certain services upon request by a local school district board of directors, including for specialized services, research information, and consultants to advise and assist district boards in particular problem areas;

- creating model policy and procedures for topics relating to waivers of credit for high school graduation, nurturing a positive social and emotional school and classmate climate, discipline, and students with epilepsy or other seizure disorders; and
 - developing cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion standards and training for school director governance.
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Summary of Substitute Bill:

Creation of Legislative District Student Councils.

A nonpartisan Legislative District Student Council (Council) is established in each legislative district to serve as advisory bodies and examine and make recommendations on issues affecting youth and education. Each Council is facilitated by the legislative office or offices of legislators who voluntarily choose to assist in facilitating the Council program.

The LYAC must select the chairs of each Council who must then coordinate with the legislators from their legislative district to stand up and maintain their district's Council. The selection of initial chairs must occur no later than October 1, 2023, and subsequent chairs must be appointed on June 1, 2025, and every two years thereafter.

The LYAC, in consultation with the Student Representative Network (Network) created within the WSSDA, must develop:

- processes and procedures that may be used to set up each Council;
- an application and selection process that may be used to select student members to serve on the Council;
- model processes, programs, and duties for the Councils which must include mechanisms for administration, supervision, and facilitation support for the Councils; and
- model practices enabling public, private, and home-based schools to conduct Council meetings as extracurricular activities.

Each Council may not conduct more than four in-person meetings, with one of those meetings being a mandatory in-person meeting in Olympia on the day dedicated to youth civic education, as organized by the LYAC.

Membership of Legislative District Student Councils.

Each Council has a maximum of 11 members as follows:

- one chair, selected by the LYAC;
- up to five student board representatives, selected by the WSSDA, who attend a public school that serves students in any of grades 9 through 12 which is located within that Council's legislative district; and
- at least five additional members who are under the age of 21 at the time of appointment and attend either a public, private, or home-based school or a community or technical college, which is located within that Council's legislative district.

Initial membership of the Council must be selected by January 15, 2024, and are appointed by a committee of the chairs of each Council, convened by the LYAC for this specific purpose. The selection of subsequent members is the responsibility of each Council and must occur no later than January 15, 2026, and on January 15 every two years thereafter.

To the extent feasible, the members of each Council must attend either a public, private, or home-based school or a community or technical college that is located within their Council's district. However, if no students from that district apply, students attending either a public, private, or home-based school or a community or technical college in an adjacent legislative district may be selected for membership.

Creation of the Student Representative Network.

The WSSDA must form a Network to examine issues important to youth and engage student school board representatives in the legislative process. A "student school board representative" is a student who is recognized by their local school board as a representative of the student body serving on that board. The WSSDA must facilitate a connection between Network members and the legislators in their legislative district, and provide Network members with learning opportunities about education policy.

The Network must:

- advise the Legislature and other entities, such as study commissions and task forces, on proposed and pending legislation relating to matters impacting youth;
- collaborate with the LYAC to organize an in-person annual day of youth civic education in Olympia;
- develop and assemble resources for new and existing student board representatives;
- provide training, photos, and other content for the WSSDA publications;
- collaborate with the WSSDA standing committees, advisory committees, task forces, and caucuses as invited; and
- provide additional student voices at the WSSDA events.

The Network may not hold more than four in-person meetings, with one of those meetings being mandatory in Olympia on the day dedicated to youth civic education, as organized by the LYAC.

The Network, in consultation with the WSSDA, must issue a report on December 1 of each year to the Legislature on the number of student board representatives in the state and the activities of the Network.

Membership of the Student Representative Network.

All student board representatives are automatically members of the Network. To the extent feasible, the WSSDA must identify at least one student board representative from each legislative district to participate in the Network. In legislative districts where there are no established student board representatives, the WSSDA must communicate with the

appropriate school districts to create awareness of the role and encourage participation.

The WSSDA must invite legislators to participate in the Network in an advisory capacity.

Other Provisions.

The LYAC must explore options to expand its appointed membership and other methods of student participation in the LYAC to include the participation of students from each legislative district who attend a public, private, or home-based school or a community or technical college in that district.

The LYAC must also organize, in coordination with the Network, the in-person annual day of youth civic education in Olympia.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill expands the scope of eligible students who may participate in the Councils to also include students in grades 9 through 12 who attend a private school or who are homeschooled. The substitute bill also requires the LYAC to explore options for expanding participation in LYAC of students in grades 9 through 12 who attend a private school or who are homeschooled, in addition to students in public schools.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The LYAC does a great job offering students the opportunity to be student leaders in the state, but there are only 22 spots open on the LYAC meaning there is not an opportunity for students from each legislative district to be involved. Creating Councils expands opportunities for students from every part of the state to make their voices heard. More opportunities for students to be leaders and have direct access to their legislators will keep student voices in the minds of legislators on a consistent basis. It would also give those students who do not meet the age criteria for the LYAC the opportunity to serve on local councils.

Civic engagement is essential to democracy. Opportunities to be on student organizations like LYAC and the Council will also teach students what it takes to enact change. Learning about government in school lacks purpose and meaning without the opportunity to see government in action. Opportunities for involvement on entities like the Council will help

students to be better informed on various topics, especially as they near the eligible voting age. Students are the experts at being students and know first-hand what is happening in schools on the local level. They deserve a meaningful role in providing input and guidance to government at all levels. Obtaining student perspective is important for gaining diverse opinions.

Civic engagement in organizations such as the LYAC, the Council, and the Network can lead to self-transformation where students learn leadership skills, discipline, and public speaking skills and provide access to networks and hands on education that would otherwise be inaccessible. It also helps for resume-building and helps students to understand the different functions of government as they plan for their future careers.

Involvement in a group like the Council affords students a chance to be a part of something bigger than themselves and increases a person's sense of social responsibility, which will improve society.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Implementation of this act will be during a period where membership will be rotating, and the existing supervisor of the program will be leaving the office. This transition and the additional duties under this act will increase the workload for the Lieutenant Governor's Office and the LYAC and will increase costs needed to support the additional responsibilities. Part of a full-time equivalent will be required to implement additional duties so more funding would be needed.

Student voices need to be strengthened, not diluted. Having the Councils may dilute the voices of students on the LYAC by putting too many cooks in the kitchen. Getting student feedback is important, but instead of creating another student organization, the LYAC should be more empowered through modifying its mission, increasing funding, increasing input gathering, and expanding its membership.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Steve Bergquist, prime sponsor; Jennifer Hernandez and Fynn Manohchompoo, Institute for Community Leadership; Logan Endres and Tejasvini Vijay, Washington State School Directors' Association; and Morgan Thomas and Kate Lewis, North Mason School District.

(Other) Kellen Hoard; and Dallas Roberts, Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.