
Appropriations Committee

HB 1897

Brief Description: Concerning enrichment funding for charter public schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Springer, Hackney, Rule, Doglio, Walen, Timmons, Reeves, Chapman, Entenman, Senn, Slatter, Fey, Bateman, Duerr, Berg, Riccelli, Simmons, Stearns, Leavitt, Rude, Connors, Ybarra, Corry, Steele, Low, Barnard, Taylor, Schmidt, Barkis, Jacobsen, Sandlin, Harris, Wylie and Griffey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to distribute a per pupil enrichment grant to eligible charter schools equal to the state local effort assistance threshold.
- Specifies that charter schools are eligible for state grants on the same basis as school districts.

Hearing Date: 2/1/24

Staff: James Mackison (786-7104).

Background:

Charter Schools.

Charter Schools are public schools that operate separately from the common school system and school districts. Charter school boards oversee the management and operation of charter schools, under five-year contracts with a charter school authorizer. There are currently two charter school authorizers, the Washington Charter School Commission and Spokane Public Schools. Charter schools must provide a program of basic education and adhere to requirements specified in state law and the charter contract, but are exempt from other state rules and laws applicable to common schools for the purpose of allowing flexibility in implementing

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.

educational programs.

In the 2023-24 school year, there are 18 charter schools in operation serving nearly 5,000 students. The timeframe to approve new charter schools ended April 3, 2021. Like common schools, charter schools receive state prototypical school funding, including funding for categorical programs like special education, bilingual programs, and the Learning Assistance Program. This funding comes from the Washington Opportunity Pathways Account (OPA), which receives net lottery revenues. State grants funding may also be provided from the OPA. Charter schools may also receive federal funding and local non-tax gifts and donations. Charter schools may not levy taxes.

Enrichment Levies and Local Effort Assistance.

Local enrichment levies can be approved by voters within a school district as a property tax for enrichment beyond the state's statutory program of basic education. Enrichment levy collections are capped for school districts at the lesser of \$2.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in the district, or \$2,500 per pupil increased for inflation (\$2,988.32 in 2023) for school districts with less than 40,000 students. School districts with 40,000 or more students subject to a per-pupil limit are allowed to collect up to \$3,000 per pupil adjusted for inflation (\$3,585.99 in 2023).

The state provides additional local effort assistance (LEA) funding to school districts that would not generate an enrichment levy of at least \$1,550 per student based on prior year enrollment when levying at a rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. An eligible school district's maximum LEA is the difference between the district's per-pupil levy amount based on a rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value and \$1,550 per student multiplied by the district's prior year enrollment. The \$1,550 per student limit, also known as the state local effort assistance threshold, is adjusted for inflation annually (\$1,842.26 in 2023). State-tribal compact schools receive LEA equal to the previous year's per-student enrichment levy for the school district in which the school is located up to \$1,550 per pupil adjusted for inflation. Charter schools do not receive LEA.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matters pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and its office have numerous and broad responsibilities prescribed in statute, including:

- making rules and regulations necessary for the administration of public education requirements;
- preparing courses of study and other materials and books for the discharge of education duties;
- fulfilling financial responsibilities, including distributing legislatively allocated funds to districts for the operation of the public school system, and awarding numerous state and federally funded grants; and
- satisfying numerous reporting and other duties assigned by the Legislature.

Summary of Bill:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction must distribute a per-pupil enrichment grant to charter schools that are located within the boundaries of a school district that collects enrichment levies. The per-pupil enrichment grant is equal to the state local effort assistance threshold. Charter schools are eligible for state grants on the same basis as school districts. An intent section is also included.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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