

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5019

As Passed Senate, February 22, 2023

Title: An act relating to classified staff providing student and staff safety.

Brief Description: Concerning classified staff providing student and staff safety.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Braun, Dhingra, Hunt, Keiser, Randall, Saldaña, Trudeau, Valdez and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/11/23, 1/19/23 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 2/22/23, 29-20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes "classified staff providing student and staff safety" from the definition of physical, social, and emotional support staff and the specific funding considerations for that group.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hunt, Mullet and Pedersen.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; McCune.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Dozier.

Staff: Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

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.

Background: The prototypical school funding model allocates general apportionment funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support prototypical elementary, middle, and high schools with assumed student enrollments. The model provides minimum allocations for designated staff types. In 2022, the Legislature passed 2SHB 1664 which increased the minimum allocations for school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and counselors over a three year period.

Most funding provided to school districts through the prototypical school funding model is for allocation purposes only, and districts have discretion over how the money is spent. Minimum allocations for one subgroup of staff is provided only to the extent of and proportionate to a district's ratio of full-time staff in that subgroup to full-time students. This subgroup is called physical, social, and emotional support staff (PSES staff) and includes nurses, social workers, psychologists, counselors, classified staff providing student and staff safety, and parent involvement coordinators.

Summary of Bill: The staff position of "classified staff providing student and staff safety" is removed from the defined subgroup of PSES staff. As a result, classified staff providing student and staff safety are no longer included when calculating a district's demonstrated ratio of full-time PSES staff to full-time equivalent students for purposes of allocating funding.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We agree with the intent to focus the measure of compliance more closely with the types of staff that the state is investing in. Tightening the fence around the enhanced staff types is a wonderful improvement. When the bill went through rulemaking, school resource officers (SROs) were authorized for the use of these funds, which was concerning and disappointing. SROs do not provide mental health support and sometimes cause harm, especially to students of color. This bill will make sure these recent investments remain consistent with original intent.

OTHER: There are some concerns that this bill would limit school district abilities to hire staff like crossing guards, hall monitors, and uncertified nurses. The funding model is in early implementation and should be allowed to play out instead of withdrawing a potentially positive policy. The proposed deletion goes beyond the original intent. These classified staff are a frequent component of health safety plans, providing supervision during unstructured time and supporting students. Schools continue to face external and internal threats and the investment in school security personnel is modest.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Julie Salvi, Washington Education Association; Bob Cooper, National Assoc of Social Workers WA Chapter; Ellie Bridge, League of Education Voters; Jenny Plaja, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

OTHER: Wendy Williams-Gilbert, Washington State School Directors' Association/Medical Lake SD; Matt Gillingham, Lake Washington School District; Rick Chisa, Public School Employees of WA.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.