

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5882

As of January 31, 2024

Title: An act relating to increasing prototypical school staffing to better meet student needs.

Brief Description: Increasing prototypical school staffing to better meet student needs.

Sponsors: Senators Stanford, Wellman, Hunt, Pedersen, Wilson, C., Conway, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nobles, Salomon, Shewmake, Valdez and Van De Wege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/10/24, 1/18/24 [DPS-WM, DNP].

Ways & Means: 2/03/24.

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Phases in additional staff allocations for teaching assistants, office support staff, and noninstructional aides in the prototypical school funding model.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5882 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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; Dozier and McCune.

Staff: Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

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.

Staff: Richard Ramsey (786-7909)

Background: Prototypical School Model. The state's public school funding model allocates funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support a prototypical school serving an assumed number of students at defined elementary, middle, and high schools levels. The use of prototypical schools is intended to illustrate the level of resources needed to operate a school of a particular size using commonly understood terms such as class size, hours of instruction, and specified staff positions.

The structure of the formula, which appears in statute, provides allocations for classroom teachers at an assumed class size, plus other building-level staff. Based on these staffing ratios, the state uses salary assumptions for each of the different staff types to generate state funding allocations. The funding provided to school districts through the prototypical school formulas is for allocation purposes only, and districts have discretion over how the money is spent, subject to some limits.

The staffing ratios for teaching assistants, office supports, and noninstructional aides are as follows:

	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching assistance, including any aspect of educational instructional services provided by classified employees.	0.936	0.700	0.652
Office support and other noninstructional aides.	2.012	2.325	3.269

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): The staffing ratios for teaching assistants, office supports, and noninstructional aides are increased to the following amounts for the 2024-25 school year:

	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching assistance, including any aspect of educational instructional services provided by classified employees	1.292	0.800	0.768

Office support and other noninstructional aides	2.342	2.716	3.346
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The staffing ratios for teaching assistants, office supports, and noninstructional aides are increased to the following amounts for the 2025-26 school year:

	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching assistance, including any aspect of educational instructional services provided by classified employees	1.648	0.900	0.884
Office support and other noninstructional aides	2.672	3.107	3.423

Beginning in the 2026-27 school year and beyond, the staffing ratios for teaching assistants, office supports, and noninstructional aides are changed to the following amounts:

	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching assistance, including any aspect of educational instructional services provided by classified employees	2.00	1.00	1.00
Office support and other noninstructional aides	3.00	3.50	3.50

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Corrects two numerical errors in the phase-in schedule for office support and other non-instructional aides in high school during the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years, changing "0.77" to "0.077" and "1.54" to "0.154."

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 on Original Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Paraprofessionals are crucial in identifying barriers to education and helping students overcome those barriers. They serve the important roles of providing one-on-one and small group instruction, which is essential for students that are struggling or trying to overcome learning loss. This is especially critical for those students who live in poverty or have IEPs. Current staff units are outdated and do not support the social, emotional, and academic needs of students. This bill helps move the levels closer to those suggested by staffing enrichment work group, and brings them fully up to the levels from Initiative 1351.

CON: This bill raises concerns about the additional taxpayer burden, as the cost would be prohibitive. The recent influx of support staff has not yielded improvements in student performance or behavior. Public school teachers have said that recently hired staff have inadequate training, experience, and oversight so funding should focus on training rather than more bodies in the classroom.

OTHER: Funding should be provided equitably rather than equally. Test scores show that Washington has some of the biggest income-based achievement gaps in the country so the bill should be amended to allocate additional FTEs equitably for high poverty schools. This bill is a good step but it promotes itself as a behavioral and mental health bill and doesn't actually fund more mental health positions. The bill should provide greater increases in staff ratios than it currently does. The increase in non-teaching staff would further reduce the ratio of teachers to non-teachers and shift resources out of the classroom.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Derek Stanford, Prime Sponsor; Julie Salvi, Washington Education Association; Tyler Muench, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Charlie Brown, South Sound School Districts ; Sara Betnel, Washington State School Directors' Association; Dune Ives; Robbi Reed, WEA - Northshore Education Association; Bob Cooper, National Association of Social Workers WA Chapter; Jim Kowalkowski, Rural Education Center; Natalya Yudkovsky, Washington State PTA; Justin McKaughan; Rick Chisa, Public School Employees of Washington (PSE); Melissa Gombosky, Evergreen, Vancouver, and Spokane Public Schools.

CON: Andy Cilley; Julie Barrett, Conservative Ladies of Washington.

OTHER: Oliver Miska, WAESN; Liv Finne, Washington Policy Center; Joy Gjersvold, Conservative Ladies of Washington; Katherine George, Johnston George LLP; Marisa Coleman; Dave Larson, Tukwila School District.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):
No one.