

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5418

As of February 4, 2025

Title: An act relating to charter school contracts.

Brief Description: Concerning charter school contracts.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Chapman, Harris and Nobles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/05/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows charter school contracts to include exemptions to one or more of the basic education requirements.
- Directs a charter school authorizer to consult with the State Board of Education on provisions in charter contracts related to the State Board of Education's duties.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: Program of Basic Education. The state's program of basic education is defined in statute as that which is necessary to provide students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet state-established high school graduation requirements. Those requirements are intended to allow students to have the opportunity to graduate with a meaningful diploma that prepares them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship.

The program of basic education includes requirements pertaining to enrollment ages, student instruction, instructional hours and days, student transportation, and statewide salary

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allocations necessary to hire and retain qualified staff.

Waiver of Requirements. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the State Board of Education (SBE) are authorized to administer waivers to certain basic education requirements, including:

- a waiver of the credit-based high school graduation requirements;
- a waiver of the total instructional hour requirements;
- a waiver of the minimum 180-day school year requirements; and
- waivers allowing calendar flexibility for economy and efficiency.

Charter Schools. Charter schools are privately run public schools that operate according to the terms of renewable five-year charter contracts that establish the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations of the parties to the contracts. Charter schools are alternatives to traditional public schools and are operated and funded separately from the traditional public school system.

During the establishment period, charter schools were authorized by either the Washington State Charter School Commission or a school district board of directors that was approved by the SBE as an authorizer. Charter school authorizers have numerous responsibilities prescribed in statute, including negotiating and executing charter contracts and determining whether charter contracts merit renewal or revocation.

The management and operation of each charter school occurs through a charter school board, the board of directors appointed or selected under the terms of the charter application. Except as provided otherwise, charter schools are subject to the supervision of OSPI and the SBE to the same extent as other public schools, and must provide a program of basic education that meets the basic education goals established in statute.

Summary of Bill: A charter school contract may include exemptions for one or more of the basic education requirements.

A charter school authorizer must consult with the SBE on provisions within new or revised charter contracts relating to the SBE's duties or authorizations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.