
ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2636

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Rude, Pollet, Marshall, and Santos)

READ FIRST TIME 02/09/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring independent, balanced, and objective
2 reviews of the performance, operations, and funding of the state's
3 public education system; adding a new section to chapter 28A.655 RCW;
4 and creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that
7 Washington's system of public education is foundational to the
8 state's economic vitality, civic health, and long-term prosperity.
9 Over time, the legislature has enacted numerous policy requirements
10 affecting public schools and school districts, many of which have
11 imposed operational, administrative, and instructional obligations.

12 (2) The legislature further finds that not all policy
13 requirements have been accompanied by sufficient or sustainable
14 funding, and that cumulative mandates, particularly those enacted
15 without full fiscal consideration, divert resources away from core
16 educational priorities and student learning.

17 (3) The legislature, therefore, intends to require independent,
18 balanced, and objective reviews of the performance, operations, and
19 funding of the state's K-12 public education system. The purpose of
20 the reviews is to evaluate whether existing statutory requirements
21 are achieving their intended outcomes, are improving student success,

1 remain relevant and effective, and represent an efficient use of
2 public resources.

3 (4) The legislature also intends that the reviews required by
4 this act inform future legislative decision making by identifying
5 requirements that should be maintained, modified, consolidated, or
6 eliminated, and by highlighting instances where obligations imposed
7 on schools and school districts were enacted without appropriate or
8 sufficient funding. These ongoing reviews are intended to support
9 alignment between policy, performance, and funding in Washington's
10 public education system.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.655
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1) The public education review steering committee is
14 established.

15 (2) The steering committee has 15 members as follows:

16 (a) The state auditor or the auditor's designee, who is a
17 nonvoting member;

18 (b) A chair of the joint legislative audit and review committee
19 or a chair's designee, who is a nonvoting member;

20 (c) The chairs of each of the two largest caucuses of the senate
21 and the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives shall
22 each appoint a member. None of these appointees may be members of the
23 legislature;

24 (d) The superintendent of public instruction or the
25 superintendent's designee;

26 (e) The chair of the state board of education or the chair's
27 designee;

28 (f) The executive director of the Washington state charter school
29 commission or the executive director's designee;

30 (g) One school principal, selected by an organization
31 representing public school principals;

32 (h) One school director, selected by an organization representing
33 public school directors;

34 (i) Two educators, one from a public primary school and one from
35 a public secondary school, both selected by an organization
36 representing public school educators;

37 (j) One representative selected by an organization representing
38 public school business professionals; and

1 (k) One representative selected by an organization representing
2 public school administrators.

3 (3) Persons appointed by the caucus chairs should be individuals
4 who represent a balance of perspectives and constituencies and have
5 an understanding of education policy, the funding of public schools,
6 and the delivery of elementary and secondary education to public
7 school students. These appointees should have knowledge and expertise
8 in pedagogical practices, performance management, fiscal analysis,
9 and other fields relevant to public education.

10 (4) The steering committee shall elect a chair from among its
11 members to serve for a term of two years. Chairs may be reappointed
12 to serve more than one term.

13 (5) Members appointed under subsection (2)(c) of this section
14 serve for terms of four years, with the terms expiring on June 30th
15 on the fourth year of the term. However, in the case of the initial
16 terms, the members appointed by the chairs of senate caucuses shall
17 serve four-year terms, and the members appointed by the chairs of
18 house of representatives caucuses shall serve three-year terms, with
19 each of the terms expiring on June 30th of the applicable year.
20 Appointees may be reappointed to serve more than one term.

21 (6) Members selected under subsections (2)(g) through (k) of this
22 section serve on the steering committee for durations determined by
23 the organizations they represent.

24 (7) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall
25 provide staff support to the steering committee. The state board of
26 education and the office of the superintendent of public instruction
27 shall provide necessary support and information to the joint
28 legislative audit and review committee. Staff support must include
29 administrative assistance for the chair and the steering committee as
30 a body, but does not include individualized administrative assistance
31 to steering committee members.

32 (8)(a) On or before October 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
33 steering committee shall make recommendations to the joint
34 legislative audit and review committee for the examination of
35 specific policy requirements and funding provisions for public
36 schools enacted by the Washington state legislature. The office of
37 the superintendent of public instruction shall provide information
38 and assistance to the steering committee for making recommendations
39 required by this section as the steering committee may reasonably
40 request. The recommendations, for purposes of guiding the review work

1 performed by the joint legislative audit and review committee, must
2 be in a prioritized order.

3 (b) Questions of the joint legislative audit and review committee
4 about implementing the recommendations provided under this subsection
5 (8), including questions about the scope or sequencing of
6 recommendations, must be submitted to the steering committee for its
7 resolution and response.

8 (9) Subject to its approved work plan and available resources,
9 the joint legislative audit and review committee shall determine the
10 timing and scope of any evaluations of policy requirements or funding
11 provisions recommended by the steering committee for review. In
12 making this determination, the joint legislative audit and review
13 committee shall consider its overall workload, other legislative
14 assignments, and the priorities identified by the steering committee.

15 (10) The joint legislative audit and review committee may also
16 determine that its available capacity is insufficient to undertake
17 new reviews recommended by the steering committee in a particular
18 year. If this occurs, the joint legislative audit and review
19 committee must notify the steering committee and provide information
20 regarding when capacity may become available for future reviews.

21 (11) In performing reviews under this section, the joint
22 legislative audit and review committee must evaluate whether the
23 policy requirement or provided funding:

24 (a) Achieves the goal or outcome expressed or reasonably inferred
25 by the applicable legislation;

26 (b) Improves student outcomes or performance;

27 (c) Has a positive cost-benefit result;

28 (d) Has ongoing relevance and education value; and

29 (e) Should be maintained, modified, or repealed.

30 (12) The steering committee shall meet at least annually and may
31 hold additional meetings at the call of the chair or by a majority
32 vote of the voting members of the steering committee. The members of
33 the steering committee must be compensated in accordance with RCW
34 43.03.220 and reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW
35 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. Steering committee meetings occurring before
36 July 1, 2027, must be held remotely.

37 (13) Beginning November 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the
38 joint legislative audit and review committee shall, in accordance
39 with RCW 43.01.036, issue a report to the governor and the
40 appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the legislature on

1 examinations conducted in accordance with this section during the
2 preceding year.

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