

# HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

## HB 2318

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**Title:** *An act relating to kindergarten instruction.*

**Brief Description:** *Establishing a full-day kindergarten grant program.*

**Sponsors:** *Representatives Cole, Wolfe, Fisher, Poulsen, Scott, Gardner, Linville, Keiser, Romero, Ogden, Butler, Appelwick, Kessler, Chopp, Costa, Anderson, Kenney, Cooper, Quall, Constantine, Mason, Sullivan, Gombosky, Lantz and Tokuda.*

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Meeting Date:** *January 15, 1998.*

**Bill Analysis Prepared by:** *Suz Morrissey (786-7111).*

**Background:** *By law, school districts are required to provide a basic education program of at least 450 hours to students in kindergarten. The basic education allocation distributed to school districts by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction funds kindergarten students based on 180 half-days of instruction or the equivalent. Each kindergarten student can be counted at a maximum of .5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) even if the school district provides a full day kindergarten. For the 1997-98 school year, there are an estimated 36,468 FTE students enrolled in kindergarten in the public schools.*

*During the fall of 1997, the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) surveyed the school districts on a variety of issues. Two-hundred sixty school districts, or 88% of the total, responded to the survey. The survey included a series of questions about kindergarten. About 41 districts, or 16% of the respondents, offer a full-day kindergarten. Tuition for the additional half-day ranges from \$120 to \$240 per month. The association asked whether districts would add or expand all day kindergarten if funding was provided through competitive grants. One-hundred twenty-seven respondents, 49% of the total, said yes. Forty respondents said no, and 84 were undecided. When asked why districts would not expand to a full day kindergarten program, 40 respondents cited lack of classroom space. Twenty-one respondents mentioned too little demand. There were other responses as well, suggesting that some respondents found competitive grants onerous, and some questioned whether full day kindergarten classes were developmentally appropriate. The statistics described above were included in a preliminary draft of WASA's survey results. The responses of additional districts will be included in the final survey report.*

**Summary of Bill:** *The Legislature finds that children may benefit from the opportunity to participate in full day kindergarten programs. The Legislature intends to make tuition-free full day kindergarten available to all public schools by the 2006-7 school year.*

*A full day kindergarten grant program is established. The program is intended to provide school districts with an opportunity to improve student learning. During the 1998-99 academic year, eligible districts may apply to the OSPI to participate in the program. The Superintendent shall give a priority to districts that satisfy two criteria. A priority will be given to districts in which at least half of the students are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program, and in which 5000 or more students are participating in the free or reduced-lunch program.*

*Participating school districts will evaluate student performance in subsequent years to determine if full day kindergarten had any long-term effects on student learning. Funding for the program will not be included in the state's basic program of education. School districts that currently provide a full day kindergarten must use grant funds to supplement, not supplant local funds used for kindergarten.*

*The Institute for Public Policy will examine the characteristics of kindergarten instruction in the common schools. In its study, the Institute will examine demographic and socioeconomic information about current and future kindergarten students, and any anticipated facility constraints and staffing needs associated with expanding kindergarten to a full day program. In addition, the Institute will examine the current tuition and other ancillary costs for full day programs and any other issues that may affect the implementation of full day kindergarten programs across the state.*

*A null and void clause is attached.*

**Appropriation:** *None.*

**Fiscal Note:** *Requested on January 12, 1998.*

**Effective Date:** *If specific funding for sections 2 and 3 of this act is not provided by June 30, 1998, in the supplemental omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and void.*