

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2635

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to kindergarten.

Brief Description: Authorizing optional full-day kindergarten.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Talcott, Appleton, P. Sullivan, Hunt, B. Sullivan, Ormsby, Cox, Quall, Nixon, Moeller, Newhouse, Hudgins, Upthegrove, Wallace, Green, Strow, Lantz, Kilmer, Hunter, Linville, Santos, Clements, McDermott, Fromhold, Tom, Kenney, O'Brien, Murray, Simpson, Conway, McIntire, Bailey, Hasegawa, Morrell, Ericks and Springer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/18/06, 2/1/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes school districts to offer full-day kindergarten as part of basic education beginning in 2008-09.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Santos, Shabro, Tom and Wallace.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The Education Commission of the States reports that approximately 60 percent of the nation's kindergarten children attend a full-day program. Nine states require districts to offer full-day programs. Recent research by the National Center for Education Statistics and studies from Indiana and Maryland found that children in full-day kindergarten made more academic progress during the year than children in half-day classes. Improvements were larger for low-income and minority children.

In Washington, school districts can offer a full-day kindergarten program, but the state's basic education funding model allocates monies for kindergarten students only for 180 half-days of instruction. Districts offering full-day programs can supplement their basic education monies with local dollars, tuition payments, or other resources to fund a full-day of kindergarten instruction.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

At the option of a school district, the basic education program for kindergarten students may consist of 180 half-days or 180 full-days of instruction. Beginning in the 2008-09 school year, for districts electing to operate a full-day kindergarten program, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must distribute monies sufficient to constitute a basic education allocation for kindergarten students based on one full school year of 180 full-days of instruction.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The effective date of the option is delayed from the 2007-08 school year to the 2008-09 school year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested substitute on February 2, 2006.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2008.

Testimony For: Funding for full-day kindergarten is the most significant investment we can make in our public education system to make all students successful. When we started education reform, we acknowledged that all kids can learn, but it will take more time for some to reach the standard. We are talking about creating extended learning opportunities to address remediation; we need to go back to the beginning as students enter the school system. The bottom line is that the state has not invested enough in the K-12 education system or in early learning. This is the top priority item for the school directors.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; Gary King, Washington Education Association; Leslie Goldstein, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Dan Steele, Washington State School Director's Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.