

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 3028

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 22, 2006

Title: An act relating to classified school employees.

Brief Description: Requiring that a review of classified school employee funding be considered in the Washington Learns study.

Sponsors: Representatives P. Sullivan, Cox, Quall, Hunt, Buri, Pearson, Ormsby, Fromhold, Anderson, Chase, Kessler, Lantz, Simpson, Sells, Appleton, Talcott, Green, Conway, Rodne, Woods, Morrell, Kilmer, B. Sullivan, Santos, Hasegawa, Kenney and Hudgins.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/06, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/22/06 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Higher Education; Weinstein, Vice Chair, Early Learning & K-12; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Carrell, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

Background: There are more than 38,000 full time equivalent classified (e.g., non-certificated) employees in public schools who are employed as instructional aides, bus drivers, custodians, food service workers, computer technicians, and business and administration staff. State funds for classified employees are allocated to school districts based on a ratio of classified staff per full-time equivalent student and an average salary for each school district. The average salary was calculated in the 1980s and has been increased through cost-of-living adjustments since that time. Unlike for certificated employees, there is no statewide salary schedule or minimum staffing ratio. Actual salaries and numbers of classified employees are determined entirely at the local level.

Legislation enacted in 2005 created a comprehensive education and financing study covering early learning, K-12, and higher education (Washington Learns). Washington Learns is comprised of a steering committee chaired by the Governor and advisory committees for each education sector. The Washington Learns first interim report was presented in November of 2005. A second interim report is due in June 2006, with a final report due in November 2006.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature finds that classified school employees are an integral part of the K-12 school system. The Legislature believes the contribution of classified school employees should be enhanced to help all students succeed in meeting state learning standards. The Legislature further finds that the K-12 funding formula for the allocation of

classified school employees has remained unchanged, despite significant changes in the delivery of services and the establishment of increased expectations for students.

The Legislature directs that the funding review by the Washington Learns Steering Committee include a thorough review of funding for classified school employees and that the report include findings and recommendations on how classified school employees can enhance students' abilities to meet state learning standards.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This legislation shows how much the elected officials value classified employees and acknowledge that classified staff can help students to meet the standards. Including these employees in the Washington Learns study recognizes their commitment to the community, to students, and to schools. Classified staff touches the lives of all students and helps them to reach their full potential.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Tom Lopp, Public School Employees; Barbara Klaver, paraeducator; John Pickett, custodian; Regina Holman, cook; Deborah Nutt, paraeducator; Sherri Tibbets, bus driver.