

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5621

As Passed Senate, March 10, 2005

Title: An act relating to preschool or nursery schools.

Brief Description: Requiring the superintendent of public instruction to adopt standards for voluntary certification of preschools.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Weinstein, Pridemore, Rockefeller, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/7/05, 2/21/05 [DP, DNP].

Passed Senate: 3/10/05, 27-21.

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

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Rockefeller and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Delvin, Pflug and Schoesler.

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

Background: Under current Washington law, the State Board of Education (SBE) establishes accreditation standards and procedures for all Washington common schools. Prior to 1995, Washington law also required SBE to establish standards and procedures for the voluntary accreditation of public and nonpublic preschool programs. That section was repealed in 1995.

Summary of Bill: A voluntary certification process is established for the child development and educational program offerings of public and nonpublic preschool programs. The superintendent of public instruction must adopt standards and procedures for the voluntary certification of public and nonpublic preschool child development and educational programs.

At a minimum, the standards should outline components including, but not limited to, the following categories:

- school-home relationships;
- class size and teacher-student ratios;
- standards for teachers and staff;
- specification of pedagogical goals, content, and methods; and
- methods for monitoring quality.

The superintendent must develop programs to encourage preschool programs to apply for approval. The office of superintendent of public instruction will also post a list of certified preschool programs on its website. Any nursery school or kindergarten program not required to be licensed under Washington law must annually file its business name, name of the business owner, address, and phone number with the office of superintendent of public instruction.

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: Currently, a significant number of children are in programs that are not regulated by the state. It is important to have one system to inform parents of the different programs available. There needs to be consistent regulations for all preschools in the state.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Agda Burchard, The Collaborative; Patricia Christenson, Montessori Country School; Robbin Dunn, WSA Headstart ECEAP.