

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6706

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 2, 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: Senators Rockefeller, Schmidt, Rasmussen, McAuliffe, Pridemore, Schoesler, Delvin, Roach, Kohl-Welles and Mulliken.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/1/06, 2/2/06 [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; Benton, Berkey, Delvin, Kohl-Welles, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

Background: Classified school employees are personnel who do not hold a professional education certificate issued by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction or are employed by a school district in a position that does not require such a certificate. The state provides funds for classified staff based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled in the district. For classified staff, there is not a state salary allocation schedule. However, each district receives an allocation for these staff based on historical salary allocations adjusted for cost of living increases. The actual salary levels for classified staff are determined through the local collective bargaining process.

In 2005, the Legislature approved E2SSB 5441, which created a comprehensive education study steering committee and three advisory committees (early learning, K-12, and higher education). The legislation commissioned a comprehensive education study, generally referred to as Washington Learns, to examine Washington's existing education system and recommend ways to improve it. The Washington Learns steering committee, working with the three advisory committees, is tasked with identifying inefficiencies and gaps in the current education system, defining a high quality education system, and determining what resources are needed to provide Washingtonians with the best education system in the world. As part of its charge, Washington Learns is in the process of studying school funding.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature finds that classified school employees are an integral part of the K-12 school system, provide a significant learning resource to students, and play a major role in developing supportive and caring relationships with students.

The Legislature directs that a thorough review of funding for classified school employees be included in the funding review that is being performed by the Washington Learns steering committee. The steering committee is directed to report findings and recommendations, including 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: As Washington Learns does it work, it must examine the role that classified employees play in the role of educating and assisting students. The passage of this bill sends two messages: 1) the funding for classified school employees must be considered and 2) that the Legislature wants to make sure that these employees are not overlooked. Classified staff play a vital role in the lives of students and the study will likely prove the value of these staff members in student education.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Phil Rockefeller, prime sponsor; Tom Lopp, Public School Employees; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

CON: No one.