

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1188

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to improving the physical health of students.

Brief Description: Requiring physical activity opportunities every school day.

Sponsors: Representatives McCoy, Barlow, Grant, Sells, Roberts, Flannigan, Ormsby, Conway, Santos and Lantz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/2/07, 2/23/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires schools to provide students with opportunities to engage in physical activity each school day.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Haigh, McDermott, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member and Roach.

Staff: Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

Background:

Physical education requirements for the public schools are established by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). In grades one through eight, students are to receive an average of 100 instructional minutes per week each year in physical education (PE).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

High schools are required to offer a one credit PE course or its equivalent for each grade in the high school program. Graduation requirements for high school include two credits in health and fitness. The fitness portion of the requirement must be met by course work in fitness education.

Students may be excused from the requirement because of physical disability, employment, religious belief, or participation in directed athletics.

Instruction in physical education has been clarified by the OSPI to include the following:

- instruction provided within the school day by a certified classroom or physical education teacher that involves all students;
- directed physical activity periods, such as periodic exercise breaks, in which all students participate;
- classroom instruction in the concepts related to cardio-respiratory health provided by a classroom teacher;
- classroom instruction in the concepts related to nutritional demands of physical activity;
- classroom instruction in the concepts related to the components of fitness and lifetime fitness plans;
- classroom instruction related to access to quality and safe fitness related services and resources; and
- recess as normally provided cannot be used to meet the 100 minutes per week requirement, although schools may use designated recess time to provide teacher directed activities; and
- participation in directed athletics includes community-based organized athletics.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

During instructional hours, all public schools must provide opportunities for a total of at least 40 minutes of physical activity per day. If there are fewer than three instructional hours in a day, then the requirement is 30 minutes. The requirement applies to students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The opportunities may include recess, but cannot include athletic programs where the activity occurs before or after instructional hours.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Changes the requirement to provide opportunities for physical activity each school day from one hour to 40 minutes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect September 1, 2007.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Increasing academic demands are encroaching on traditional recess times. At the same time, childhood obesity is a significant and growing problem. Along with that we're seeing increases in children with diseases usually found in adults. The desire is not to take away from education time, but to make sure that academic improvement is not at the expense of physical health. This can be done in a variety of ways, but daily physical activity is essential to the health and well being of children. Also, physically healthy children tend to perform better academically. This will ensure that all students at least have minimum opportunities to be physically active on a daily basis.

(Opposed) This bill does not address the issue of nutrition, which is also a major factor in the obesity and increasing health problems in children. There is concern that the requirements of this bill create unfunded mandates for the school districts. It is unclear how this will be implemented, and it would be impossible to monitor compliance. As we raise academic standards, how can we take more instructional time away from students? Obesity, nutrition, and physical health are important, but those issues need to be addressed primarily in the home. If parents are unhappy with how a school is handling these issues they need to address those concerns with their local school board.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representation McCoy, prime sponsor; Ryan Spiller, Washington Health Foundation; and Donna Christensen, Washington State Parent Teacher Association and Diabetes Association.

(Opposed) Mitch Denning, Alliance of Education Associations; and Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.