

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1872

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to enhancing student learning opportunities and student achievement.

Brief Description: Enhancing student learning opportunities and achievement.

Sponsors: Representative Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/8/07, 2/27/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands the goals of the Basic Education Act, including focusing on the educational achievement of students, high expectations for students, and preparation for the responsibilities of civic participation in a pluralistic society.
- Phases-in funding for voluntary all-day kindergarten by providing support for students in schools with the highest poverty levels.
- Creates an English as a Second Language instruction field study and demonstration project.
- Creates the Washington Community Learning Center Program which, subject to funding, provides grants to support afterschool programs offered by partnerships of schools and community organizations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Haigh, McDermott, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member and Roach.

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.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The Washington Learns comprehensive education study, chaired by Governor Gregoire, issued final recommendations in November 2006. The Governor proposes implementation of a number of the recommendations regarding enhancing student learning opportunities and achievement through her proposed budget for the 2007-09 biennium and proposed legislation.

Basic Education Act Goals. As currently stated in statute, the goal of the Basic Education Act for Washington's schools is to "provide students with the opportunity to become responsible citizens, to contribute to their own economic well-being and to that of their families and communities, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives." The statute then describes the four student learning goals that form the basis of Washington's learning standards.

Kindergarten. 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, student achievement funds, tuition payments, or other resources.

Special Projects. One of the recommendations of the Washington Learns report was for the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to implement a regional best practices demonstration project for English language learners that coordinates curriculum, assessment, teacher training, and family involvement.

In 2004, the Washington Afterschool Network and School's Out Washington, in collaboration with the SPI, developed a statewide plan called "Afterschool in Washington: A Smart, Strategic Investment." One of the plan's primary recommendations was that the Legislature provide \$5 million to support 50 additional afterschool programs to serve 9,000 at-risk, low-income, and minority children.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Basic Education Act Goals. The goals of the Basic Education Act are expanded to include providing students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens and to explore and understand diverse perspectives. The expanded goals also include developing a public school system that focuses on the educational achievement of all students and includes high expectations for and prepares students to achieve personal and academic success. Knowledge and skills in world history and cultures and personal financial literacy are added to the student learning goals. A fifth student learning goal is added: to understand and be fully prepared to exercise the responsibilities of civic participation in a pluralistic society.

Kindergarten. Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, funding for voluntary all-day kindergarten programs is phased-in beginning with schools with the highest percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch.

School districts receiving all-day kindergarten program support must:

- (1) provide an instructional program of at least 1,000 hours;
- (2) provide a curriculum that assists students in acquiring academic, communication, social, and emotional skills and provides hands-on learning experiences;
- (3) establish learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity;
- (4) demonstrate strong connections with early learning community providers; and
- (5) participate in kindergarten readiness activities.

School districts receiving funds for all-day kindergarten programs must use some of the funds on a one-time basis for strategic planning. If sufficient funds are available, districts not yet eligible for program support can access funding for strategic planning.

Special Projects.

The English as a Second Language (ESL) demonstration project uses two strategies: (1) a field study of an ongoing project in schools and districts where Spanish is the predominant other language; and (2) a project that provides professional development and planning time to approximately three large schools with many first languages among the students. The SPI selects the participants for the large school project, and participants must partner with an institution of higher education or professional development provider with expertise in supporting student acquisition of academic English.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) must conduct the field study and gather information from the project schools, as well as review current literature regarding best practices. An interim report on the Institute's findings is due November 1, 2008, with a final report due December 1, 2009. The ESL demonstration project expires September 1, 2010.

Washington Community Learning Center Program. The Washington Community Learning Center Program is established, to be administered by the SPI. To the extent funding is available, the SPI provides grants to any organization that meets the eligibility criteria of the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. Priority must be given to requests that focus on reading and mathematics proficiency for students who attend Title I schools that are not meeting federal school improvement goals, and requests that include free transportation for students. Priority can be given to requests that involve multiple schools and organizations. Grant funds can be used for a broad array of out-of-school activities.

Each grant is for a maximum of five years. Recipients must report annually to the SPI, including reporting on how transportation is provided for students. To the extent funding is available, the SPI may provide grants for training and professional development of center staff. Grant recipients can seek flexibility from SPI to use a portion of their state transportation allocation to transport students to community learning center programs.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The goals of the Basic Education Act are further expanded to include references to students becoming respectful global citizens, exploring and understanding diverse perspectives, and

preparing students to achieve personal and academic success. The learning goals are expanded to include world history and cultures and financial literacy. A fifth learning goal is added.

Funding for all-day kindergarten programs supports all students in a school, not just students eligible for free and reduced lunch. Districts must use some funds on a one-time basis for strategic planning. If funds are available, districts not yet eligible for program support for all-day kindergarten can access funds for strategic planning. Provisions encouraging school districts to use increases in student achievement funds for reducing primary grade class sizes are removed.

Demonstration projects creating innovative K-3 foundations programs and health-related career academies are eliminated. The Washington Community Learning Center Program is established.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except section 4, relating to Community Learning Center Programs, which takes affect August 1, 2007.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(Invited testimony) Lincoln Elementary offers an alternative program within a public school. The instructional approach is focused on a carefully planned philosophy of teaching and learning that includes parent/family involvement, a multi-age configuration, an integrated curriculum that encourages creativity and social and emotional health of students, social justice and community service, and active hands-on learning.

(In support) Health-related career academies can serve multiple purposes: build public-private partnerships, address workforce needs, and serve at-risk students. It is exciting to build relationships for students so they can see a career path and reasons for their academic studies in high school. Evergreen School District has a health and business careers model program designed and ready to go. There is strong support within the business and education community.

A group of school districts in the Yakima Valley have created a network to improve instructional practice for English language learner students. The purpose of the field study is to demonstrate what works very clearly and with data, and to strengthen preparation and professional development of teachers to help students acquire academic English skills. Demonstration projects could allow creation of a coherent plan and strategy to be exported for other school districts, including those dealing with multiple languages. The achievement gap is getting wider, and there is a sense of urgency to find ways to address it. Too many English language learner students are incorrectly identified with cognitive disabilities.

The proposal for all-day kindergarten is more than just an expansion of time, it is a different quality of kindergarten programming, including a clear link to early learning. The demonstration project for K-3 foundations programs has a research component and is geared to improving schools. Washington Learns recommended amendments to the goals of the Basic Education Act to update expectations for our school system. Next year is the last "step-up" for student achievement funds. The intent is to bring the issue of class size reduction to the attention of school leaders.

(In support with concerns) There is long-standing support for all-day kindergarten, particularly programs tied to early learning. But there could be a bottleneck of demand. The plan should be phased in over six years, not ten. Demonstration projects are appealing, but full funding of Basic Education should occur first. There is a need to pay for what has been promised, including full funding for compensation.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (Invited testimony) Cheryl Petra and Gretchen Steiger, Lincoln Elementary School.

(In support) Troy Hutson, Health Workforce Institute; Rick Cole, Sunnyside School District; Steve Myers, Toppenish School District; Leslie Goldstein and Judy Hartmann, Governor's Executive Policy Office; Donna Obermeyer, Washington State Special Education Coalition; and Marcia Fromhold, Evergreen School District.

(In support with concerns) Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Uriel Iniquez, Commission on Hispanic Affairs; and Kyra Kester, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.