
Education Committee

SB 5378

Brief Description: Regarding accreditation of digital learning programs.

Sponsors: Senator Eide.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the requirement that digital learning schools and programs receive accreditation from the State Board of Education and, instead, requires accreditation from the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools, a national accreditation program, or an accreditation program listed by the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) with the endorsement of the Washington Coalition for Online Learning.
- Tasks the OSPI with adopting rules regarding the revised accreditation requirement.

Hearing Date: 3/17/09

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195)

Background:

The State Board of Education (SBE) was reconstituted effective January 1, 2006. The SBE took on new duties while some of the SBE's earlier responsibilities were transferred or eliminated. Additional changes were made in the following year pursuant to recommendations of a legislative subcommittee. One of the changes made pursuant to 2006 legislation was to eliminate the SBE's responsibility for accrediting public schools. The SBE remains responsible for accreditation of private schools.

Summary of Bill:

Changes are made in statute to reflect the fact that the SBE does not accredit public schools or public school programs whose primary purpose is to provide digital learning programs. These schools and programs must, instead, receive accreditation through the Northwest Association of

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.

Accredited Schools (NAAS), a national accreditation program, or an accreditation program listed by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) with the endorsement of the Washington Coalition for Online Learning. The OSPI is charged with adopting rules regarding such accreditation.

The NAAS accredits distance education, elementary, foreign nation, high, K-12, middle level, post secondary non-degree granting, residential, special purpose, supplementary education, and travel education schools. It is one of six regional accreditation agencies. The geographic territory of NAAS covers the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.