SENATE BILL REPORT
ESB 5617

As Amended by House, April 8, 2009

Title: An act relating to the early learning advisory council.

Brief Description: Changing early learning advisory council provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Kauffman and McAuliffe.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/11/09, 2/16/09 [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/09/09, 47-0.
Passed House: 4/08/09, 98-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.
   Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair, Early Learning; Oemig, Vice Chair, K-12; King, Ranking Minority Member; Hobbs, Holmquist, Jarrett, McDermott, Roach and Tom.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: In 2007 the Legislature established the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) to advise the Department of Early Learning (DEL) on statewide early learning needs and to develop a statewide early learning plan.

ELAC may include up to 25 members. Twenty-four of the members are specified in statute, including one representative each from DEL, the Office of Financial Management (OFM), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Department of Health (DOH), the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the sovereign tribal governments, the Washington Federation of Independent Schools (WFIS), and, in addition, at least seven leaders in early childhood education, two members of the House of Representatives, two members of the Senate, two parents, one of whom must serve on DEL's Parent Advisory Council, and two members of a private-public partnership.

ELAC must include diverse, statewide representation from public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. Its membership must reflect regional, racial, and cultural diversity to adequately

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represent the needs of all children and families in the state. Council members serve two-year terms. ELAC has two co-chairs. DEL provides staff support.

Summary of Engrossed Bill: It is clarified that ELAC is established to advise DEL on statewide early learning issues that would build a comprehensive system of quality early learning programs and services for Washington's children and families by aligning resources, establishing key performance measures, and ensuring children are ready for school.

Beginning August 1, 2009, the statewide early learning plan must guide DEL to promote alignment of the private and public sector actions, objectives, and resources and ensure school readiness. The plan must be submitted annually to the Legislature. ELAC membership is reduced to the following 15 voting members:
- one representative each from OFM, DSHS, DOH, HECB, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, and SBCTC, appointed by the Governor;
- one representative from OSPI, appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- four leaders in early childhood education appointed by the Governor, with one representative having expertise on children with disabilities, one on the K-12 system, one on family day care providers, and one on child care centers;
- one parent who must serve on DEL's Parent Advisory Council, appointed by the Governor;
- one representative of the private-public partnership to be appointed by their board;
- one representative designated by sovereign tribal governments; and
- one representative from WFIS.

ELAC may include up to 25 total members, including the following nonvoting members:
- the director of DEL;
- two members of the House of Representatives, one from each caucus, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and two members of the Senate, one from each caucus, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- three additional leaders in early childhood education and one additional parent, appointed by the Governor; and
- one additional representative from the private-public partnership board.

ELAC must be co-chaired by voting members. Each voting member of the board will be reimbursed for travel expenses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Revising ELAC would reduce the membership to ensure a quorum, increase efficiency, and reduce costs. The changes give further direction for ELAC to work with DEL and clarify the purpose and goals of ELAC. There is some concern that reducing the number of early childhood experts could decrease

the effectiveness of ELAC. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a good addition to ELAC and will support professional development. Reporting annually to the Legislature and the P-12 Council will increase accountability and strengthen early learning's connection to K-12. One recommendation is to amend the bill to incorporate the requirements of the Head Start Act, which would enable the state to access federal dollars for an early learning council. However, the federal act requires three key members to be added to ELAC: the Head Start state collaboration coordinator, a migrant Head Start representative, and a tribal Head Start representative.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kauffman, prime sponsor; Kursten Holabird, SEIU 925; Agda Burchard, Washington Association for the Education of Young Children; Katy Warren, Washington State Association of Head Start and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program.

House Amendment(s): Removes all language creating the two categories of ELAC membership, voting and nonvoting, but retains the addition of a representative from the Workforce Board. Requires the appointment of a replacement for a council member who is unable to attend three consecutive ELAC meetings. Specifies that the annual report must be submitted electronically.