

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1521

As Passed House:
February 23, 2011

Title: An act relating to recognizing Washington innovation schools.

Brief Description: Recognizing Washington innovation schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Maxwell, Haigh, Sullivan, Pettigrew, Santos, Kenney, Lias, Frockt, Jacks, Clibborn, Probst, Sells, Lytton, Goodman, Orwall, Van De Wege, Green, Hunt, McCoy, Ladenburg, Billig, Seaquist, Fitzgibbon, Carlyle and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/8/11, 2/10/11, 2/15/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/23/11, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify and designate Washington Innovation Schools and to highlight and recognize their accomplishments, including a logo, certificate, webpage, and other strategies.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 21 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Angel, Billig, Dahlquist, Fagan, Finn, Haigh, Hargrove, Hunt, Klippert, Kretz, Ladenburg, Lias, Maxwell, McCoy, Probst and Wilcox.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

In Washington, local school district boards of directors have broad authority to manage and oversee the programs of education offered in their districts. Local districts may create and configure educational and support services; establish schools that serve special populations

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of students or offer special magnet programs; create partnerships with community organizations and businesses; enter into inter-local agreements with other districts or Educational Service Districts to deliver programming and services; and implement innovations in staffing, parent involvement, curriculum, and instruction.

There are numerous examples of innovative schools and programs offered by local school districts across the state, but awareness about them by the public or other school districts is limited. There is no central repository of information about innovative schools and programs.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature finds that innovation schools accomplish the following objectives:

- provide students and parents with a diverse array of educational options;
- promote active and meaningful parent and community involvement and partnership with local schools;
- serve as laboratories for educational experimentation and innovation;
- respond and adapt to different styles, approaches, and objectives of learning;
- hold students and educators to high expectations and standards; and
- encourage and facilitate bold, creative, and innovative educational ideas.

Examples of innovation schools are provided.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is directed to develop basic criteria and a streamlined review process to identify and designate Washington Innovation Schools. Within available funds, the OSPI also creates a logo, certificates, and other recognition strategies to encourage and highlight the schools. A page on the OSPI website must include research literature, best practices, summary information about Washington Innovation Schools, and a link to the schools' websites. The OSPI is encouraged to offer the design and development of the webpage as a project for an administrator intern. The OSPI must publicize the Washington Innovation School designation and encourage additional models of innovation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) More kids deserve the opportunity to experience innovation, and that can be done by sharing information. There are Arts schools and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics schools. There are innovation schools within the current local governance structure. More should be done to support them.

Talbot Hill Elementary has been a laboratory school at the national level for its micro-society program, and would like to share with others in the state what can happen in public schools when people get together and do innovative things. Aviation High School offers hands-on learning grounded in aviation and space. The teaching and learning model is dependent on strong partnerships with the business community. Aviation High School has greater autonomy over staffing, the budget, curriculum, and school management, but the governing body is still the school district.

This is a good bill with a strong message: there is a need to identify current best practices and recognize and promote innovation in public schools. Innovation is an important aspect of the public education system; it allows reaching out to students with different learning styles and makes students competitive in the global marketplace. In a low-cost manner, this bill will enable information to be collected to develop public awareness and partnerships. There is tremendous capacity in the system for innovation.

This is a great step toward enhancing innovation because it recognizes existing efforts within current laws and regulations, and provides an opportunity for schools to collaborate. This allows school districts, teachers, nonprofit organizations, and foundations to go to the source of current innovations and see how they work in practice. This is a short bill, but not a little one. This is on the right track to help the alternative learning community connect with one another so that all can learn about innovative instructional practices.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Maxwell, prime sponsor; Shawn Lewis, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Hannah Lidman, League of Education Voters; Ramona Hattendorf, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Sally Boni, Talbot Hill Elementary School; Reba Gilman, Aviation High School; Ron Thiele, Strong Public Schools, Issaquah School District; and Trish Millines Dziko, Technology Access Foundation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (In support) Heather Cope, League of Education Voters; Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals; and Marcia Fromhold, Vancouver School District.

(In support with concerns) Marsha Riddle Buly, Western Washington University.