
Ways & Means Committee

HB 2111

Brief Description: Implementing selected recommendations from the 2011 report of the quality education council.

Sponsors: Representatives Maxwell, Anderson, Sullivan, Dammeier, Orwall, Lytton, Frockt, Probst, Finn, Moscoso, Seaquist, Sells, Goodman, Reykdal, Hunt, Wilcox, Dahlquist, Fagan, Haigh, Santos, Pettigrew, Carlyle, Van De Wege, Moeller, Ladenburg, McCoy, Jinkins, Billig, Pedersen, Fitzgibbon, Wylie and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to ensure that a fairness and bias review has been conducted before implementing revisions to the state Essential Academic Learning Requirements.
- Requires school districts to adopt a policy defining a high school credit and authorizes the State Board of Education to repeal a seat-time based definition.
- Authorizes the SPI to require use of a kindergarten readiness assessment in low-performing schools receiving federal school improvement grants.
- Allows Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funds to be used to support students in science and requires a study of the impact of remediation strategies funded by the LAP on student achievement.
- Requires student performance data from the Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program to be reported online through the Washington State Report Card.
- Adopts a definition of a highly capable student and directs the SPI to adopt consistent procedures for school districts to identify, assess, and select their most highly capable students for purposes of the Highly Capable Program.
- Allows qualified graduates of the Recruiting Washington Teachers Program in high schools to participate on a space-available basis in an alternative route teacher preparation scholarship program.
- Directs a Compensation Working Group to conduct a comprehensive analysis of educator professional development and mentoring needs.

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.

Hearing Date: 5/11/11

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349).

Background:

Quality Education Council. Legislation adopted in 2009 established the Quality Education Council (QEC) and tasked it with informing and making strategic recommendations on the ongoing implementation of the program of Basic Education and the funding to support it. The QEC is composed of representatives from the Legislature, the State Board of Education (SBE), the Department of Early Learning, the Professional Educator Standards Board, the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (Achievement Gap Committee), and the Office of the Governor. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is the current QEC Chair.

During 2010 the QEC convened two technical working groups to examine the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) and the Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP). The QEC also received recommendations from the SBE on proposed revisions to state high school graduation requirements and a Highly Capable Program (HCP) technical working group established by a proviso in the 2010 Supplemental Operating Budget. Other groups making recommendations to the QEC included the Building Bridges Dropout Prevention and Intervention Work Group, the Achievement Gap Committee, and a technical working group tasked with examining types and levels of classified staff needed in schools.

In its 2011 report to the Legislature, the QEC made a number of recommendations intended to:

- make progress toward increased funding for Basic Education;
- provide students the opportunity to graduate prepared for postsecondary success;
- close the opportunity gap for disadvantaged students and students of color, including supporting development of partnerships between schools, students, families, and communities;
- support education professionals, including programs that encourage diverse populations to become teachers;
- support improvements in math and science; and
- invest in early learning.

Other Programs. The Recruiting Washington Teachers program (RWT) operates as a grant-funded partnership between high schools, colleges of education, and community organizations to recruit and provide training and support for diverse high school students to enter the teaching profession. There are no scholarships available to provide a further incentive for these students to enter teaching.

The Pipeline for Paraeducators (Pipeline) program assists classified school employees to first earn a transferrable associate degree, and then enroll in an alternative route program to earn a bachelor's degree and teaching certification. Participation in the Pipeline has been limited.

The Opportunity Internship Program (OIP) provides incentives for consortia of high schools, businesses, and community organizations to provide internships and other training opportunities in high-demand occupations for low-income high school students. Students who complete the OIP are eligible for up to one year of state financial aid for postsecondary study.

Summary of Bill:

Instruction and Support.

Fairness and Bias Review. Before implementing revisions to the state Essential Academic Learning Requirements, the SPI must first ensure that a fairness and bias review has been conducted, including an opportunity for input from the Achievement Gap Committee and an additional diverse group of community representatives, parents, and educators.

Definition of a High School Credit. By July 1, 2012, each school district that grants high school diplomas must adopt a policy defining a high school credit and specifying how the district will assure that students have gained the knowledge and skills to earn a credit. The Washington State School Directors' Association, in consultation with the SBE, must develop a model policy that school districts may choose to adopt to meet this requirement. The SBE is authorized to repeal the seat-time based definition of a credit by May 31, 2012. Districts must certify their policies annually to the SBE.

Dropout-Focused Technical Assistance. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must provide technical assistance, within available funds, for school and district improvement that is specifically targeted to reduce school dropouts and improve graduation rates.

Family Engagement. The title of one of the staffing categories within the prototypical school funding formula is changed from "Parent Involvement Coordinator" to "Family Engagement Coordinator." Schools that are subject to state accountability requirements because they are among the persistently lowest-performing schools in the state must include use of Family Engagement Coordinators in their Required Action plans to improve student achievement. The OSPI may also require other schools receiving federal school improvement grants to use Family Engagement Coordinators.

Kindergarten Readiness. Elementary schools that are subject to state accountability requirements must include use of the state kindergarten readiness assessment in their Required Action plans. The OSPI may also require other elementary schools receiving federal school improvement grants to use the assessment.

Opportunity Gap.

Remediation. The skill areas to be addressed by the LAP are expanded to include science. Extended learning opportunities for struggling students are expanded to include 9th through 12th grade students rather than only 11th and 12th grade.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy is directed to work with the OSPI to design and implement a research study to measure the impact on student achievement of remediation strategies funded by the LAP. The study design must be submitted to the QEC and the education committees of the Legislature by September 1, 2011, with results of the study submitted by September 1, 2012.

Bilingual Program. Aggregated results of student performance on the English language proficiency assessments used in the TBIP must be posted on the Washington State Report Card website by school and district. Information about the average length of time students are in the TBIP, student progress in learning English, students meeting annual reading and mathematics performance targets, and the academic performance of former TBIP students must also be posted.

Highly Capable. A legislative finding is added to the HCP that the education of highly capable students may include supports and services in addition to those ordinarily provided in general education. For purposes of the HCP, a highly capable student is defined as a student who performs or shows potential for performing at significantly advanced levels when compared to others of his or her age, experience, or environment. Rules adopted by the OSPI for school districts to nominate, assess, and select their most highly capable students must address consistent procedures for universal screening, public notification, use of multiple criteria, involvement of qualified professionals, family involvement, and safeguards to reduce bias.

Recruiting Washington Teachers. Graduates of the RWT may participate in the Pipeline scholarship, as long as they meet the qualifications for the program, and paraeducators continue to receive first priority for scholarship awards. Partnerships that offer the RWT may be considered consortia for purposes of the OIP and thus apply to participate in the OIP.

Education Professionals.

Evaluation. The Legislature intends to continue development and implementation of revised teacher and principal evaluation systems authorized in 2010, including support of pilot school districts.

Professional Development. A Compensation Working Group scheduled to be convened beginning July 1, 2011, must include among its other work, a comprehensive analysis of educator professional development needs. Topics to be addressed include cultural competency; competency in language acquisition; science, technology, engineering and mathematics instruction; and mentoring needs for all types of school staff.

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, except for section 104, which changes a staffing category in the prototypical school funding formula; section 202, which allows the Learning Assistance Program to address science skills; and section 208, adding legislative intent to the Highly Capable Program, which take effect on September 1, 2011.