

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5427

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education
Ways & Means

Title: An act relating to the assessment of students in state-funded full- day kindergarten classrooms.

Brief Description: Regarding an assessment of students in state-funded full-day kindergarten classrooms.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator McAuliffe; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/17/11, 3/24/11 [DPA];

Ways & Means: 3/30/11, 3/31/11 [DPA(ED)].

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Requires school districts receiving all-day kindergarten support to agree to utilize the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills.
- Permits the Superintendent of Public Instruction to grant annual, renewable waivers to school districts to utilize an alternative assessment, and prescribes a time limit and provides criteria for such waivers.
- Allows parents and guardians to excuse their students from participating in the assessment.
- Provides for a fairness and bias review of the assessment before it is implemented.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Billig, Finn, Haigh, Hunt, Ladenburg, Liias, Maxwell, McCoy and Probst.

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.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Angel, Dahlquist, Fagan, Hargrove, Klippert, Kretz and Wilcox.

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

Kindergarten Assessment Pilot.

In 2009 the Legislature provided \$100,000 over the biennium, contingent on an equal match from private sources, for the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to work with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and others to identify and test a kindergarten assessment process and tools in geographically diverse school districts. It is being piloted during the 2010-11 school year in 115 classrooms around the state, with approximately 2,600 kindergarten students. The DEL submitted a mid-year report to the Legislature on January 15, 2011. A final report will be available in the summer of 2011.

All-Day Kindergarten.

Schools receiving all-day kindergarten support must agree to:

- provide at least 1,000 hours of instructional program;
- provide a curriculum that offers a rich, varied set of experiences that assist students in:
 - developing a variety of communication skills;
 - learning science, social studies, arts, health and physical education, and a world language other than English;
 - acquiring large and small motor skills;
 - acquiring social and emotional skills including successful participation in learning activities as an individual and as part of a group; and
 - learning through hands-on experiences;
- provide learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity;
- demonstrate strong connections and communication with early learning providers; and
- participate in kindergarten program readiness activities with early learning providers and parents.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A new condition is added for receipt of all-day kindergarten funding. Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, and to the extent funds are available, school districts receiving all-day kindergarten support must also agree to identify the skills, knowledge, and characteristics of kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year. The schools must utilize a kindergarten assessment process specified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) and report the results to the Superintendent. Parents and guardians may excuse their students from participating in the assessment.

The assessment is to be known as the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WAKids). The purposes of this assessment are as follows:

- to support social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and development;
- to support early learning provider and parent involvement; and
- to inform instruction to meet the needs of individual students.

The Superintendent is authorized to grant annual, renewable waivers in order to allow for the administration of a kindergarten assessment other than the WAKids. These waivers are authorized only until full implementation of state-funded all-day kindergarten.

There must be a fairness and bias review of the assessment before it is implemented.

To the extent funds are available, the Superintendent is required to make the assessment process available on a voluntary basis at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year.

Amended Bill Compared to Second Substitute Bill:

The striking amendment makes the following changes:

- references the following additional purposes for a kindergarten assessment:
 - supporting early learning provider and parent involvement; and
 - supporting social-emotional, physical, cognitive growth of children;
- requires the administration of the WAKids rather than "a kindergarten assessment process," unless an annual, renewable waiver to utilize a different assessment is granted by the Superintendent;
- removes the directive to seek input from the University of Washington regarding issues of cultural responsiveness, disability accommodations, and parent involvement and satisfaction, and replaces it with a requirement that the Superintendent and the DEL must assure that a fairness and bias review has been conducted with input from the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee and an additional diverse group of community representatives, parents, and educators; and
- provides that the section requiring the fairness and bias review goes into effect within 90 days after session adjourns.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 24, 2011.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2011, except for section 2, relating to fairness and bias review, which takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is of the highest priority. There are a myriad of benefits to this, including breaking down barriers and fostering connections. Washington spends a tremendous amount of money to cover the cost of students having to repeat grades. If

children show up ready to learn in kindergarten, they are less likely to have to repeat a grade later on, and they are less likely to be referred to special education services. The WAKids can save the taxpayers money and also keep the state from losing students into the educational opportunity gap. It is very important that all schools and communities have the benefit of the various components of the WAKids, including the teacher connection to the families that come from home visits. Teachers need to know about the home life of their students. This will send a message to the children that they are important and that their futures matter. All students should have what South Shore Elementary in the 37th District has. It is a very big challenge to assess the skills with which students come to school with. For instance, if students have access to technology in their homes this will help them. This kindergarten assessment effort is a tool that will enable important connections to be forged between communities and schools. It will help students move on for the next century. The Superintendent is very supportive. The fiscal note reflects that the DEL has a \$100,000 grant and there is private money available in the amount of \$ 400,000; therefore the amount needed from the state is about \$1 million. If children's needs are assessed early, they can get the assistance they need and come to school with the appropriate and necessary skills. It is very evident when one goes into the schools, which children came to school with a base of knowledge and skills, and which did not. This includes the knowledge about what is appropriate behavior in school. When some students do not possess this knowledge, it is disruptive to the learning environment in general, as well as being detrimental to the students themselves.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Hannah Lidman, League of Education Voters; Sebrena Burr; Hector Pop; Bob Butts, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Jim Kainber, Stand for Children.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Education. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Vice Chair; Carlyle, Cody, Dickerson, Haigh, Hinkle, Hudgins, Hunt, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Pettigrew, Ross, Seaquist, Springer and Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Haler, Parker, Schmick and Wilcox.

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Ways & Means Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Education:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2011, except for section 2, relating to fairness and bias review, which takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Washington Kids (WAKids) is a priority for the League of Education Voters. It is expected that about one third of the funds will come from private and federal sources. This is an opportunity to make a minimal investment and leverage it to obtain a maximum return. Thrive by Five was supportive of the pilot project, is supportive of full implementation, and stands ready to partner with the state on this assessment. The kindergarten assessment can provide a window into ongoing learning needs at a time when something can be done to meet those needs. It allows issues to be flagged early. There will most likely be about \$100,000 in federal funding available for this bill. There are conversations ongoing with private entities which could provide as much as \$400,000 in additional funding for this project.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Hannah Lidman, League of Education Voters; Molly Boyajian, Thrive by Five Washington; and Ramona Hattendorf, Washington State Parent Teachers Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.