

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6050

As of February 3, 2012

Title: An act relating to waivers from the one hundred eighty-day school year requirement.

Brief Description: Expanding waivers from the one hundred eighty-day school year requirement.

Sponsors: Senators Becker, Swecker, Schoesler, Morton, Honeyford, Carrell, Hewitt and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/19/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: Current law requires each school district's kindergarten through grade 12 basic educational program to consist of a minimum of 180 school days per school year and 180 half days of instruction, or equivalent, in kindergarten. The required half days for kindergarten are to be increased to a minimum of 180 school days per school year in accordance with the implementation schedule in law pertaining to voluntary all-day kindergarten.

In 2009 the Legislature passed SHB 1292 which created a pilot program that gave the State Board of Education (SBE) authority to grant waivers from the requirement for a 180-day school year to school districts that propose to operate one or more schools on a flexible calendar for purposes of economy and efficiency. No more than five districts may be granted waivers. Waivers from the requirement for a 180-day school year may be granted for up to three years, and the pilot program expires August 31, 2014. SBE may only grant five school districts these waivers: two to districts with student populations under 150; and three to districts with student populations between 150 and 500. A school district seeking a waiver from the requirement for a 180-day school year must submit an application, a signed resolution, and all supporting documentation to SBE.

SBE is required to examine the waivers granted from the requirement for a 180 day school year and recommend to the education committees of the Legislature by December 15, 2013, whether the waiver program should be continued, modified, or allowed to terminate. The

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recommendation should focus on whether the program resulted in improved student learning as demonstrated by improved scores on the Washington assessment of student learning, results of the dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills, student grades, and attendance.

Summary of Bill: SBE may grant no more than 25 waivers to school districts from the requirement for a 180-day school year. Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, 20 of the waivers granted from the requirement for a 180-day school year will be granted to school districts with student populations of between 501 students and 2200 students.

When SBE examines the waivers granted and makes a recommendation to the education committees of the Legislature, the recommendation should focus on whether the program resulted in improved student learning as demonstrated by improved scores on the statewide student assessment, results of the dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills or another valid and reliable literary assessment, student grades, and attendance.

Waivers from the requirement for a 180-day school year granted to districts with student populations under 500 expire August 31, 2014. Waivers granted to districts with student populations between 501 students and 2200 students expire August 31, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: The Eatonville school district is trying to get away from having half-days, and a waiver from the 180-day school year would allow them to do that and also increase student and teacher hours. It would also allow them to provide all-day kindergarten because of the money saved from transportation costs, food, etc. Teachers' pay would not suffer, although the classifieds would. This waiver pilot program really provides for measurement of outcomes; student improvement is measured through the statewide student assessment. The Paterson school district has experienced very favorable results with their modified calendar. They estimated a savings of \$29,000 but ended up saving more than \$44,000. This allowed money to be put back into Tier I and II programs. The community loves the modified calendar. There is also lower absenteeism. Students get an uninterrupted four days and more student/teach contact time. OSPI supports this bill.

OTHER: There is some question as to whether the number of waivers should be expanded prior to the review that is to be performed by the State Board of Education.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Becker, prime sponsor; Alan Burke, OSPI; Peggy Douglas, Paterson School District; Rick Palmer.

OTHER: Dan Steele, WA Assn. of School Administrators.