

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6348

As of January 25, 2012

Title: An act relating to laboratory school partnerships.

Brief Description: Creating the laboratory school partnership program.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Eide, Hargrove, Conway, Rolfes, Kohl-Welles, Frockt and Harper; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/25/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 2010 the Legislature granted the authority and specified a process for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the State Board of Education (SBE) to implement an accountability system that recognizes successful schools and requires certain actions by school districts with the lowest-achieving schools. The Required Action process includes identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools, conducting an academic performance audit with an external review team to identify potential reasons for the low performance, and producing a plan to improve. If necessary, the district must reopen collective bargaining agreements to address audit findings. If the school district and employee organizations are unable to agree on the changes, the parties must request the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) to appoint a mediator. If PERC finds that the parties are unable to reach agreement after a reasonable period, the PERC Director must certify any disputed issues for a decision by the Superior Court of the county in which the district is located. In accordance with a specified timeline and process, the Court must enter an order selecting the Required Action plan proposal that best responds to the issues raised in the school district's academic performance audit and meets certain criteria. A district may be released from the Required Action after the district implements a plan for three years, has made progress, and no longer has a persistently lowest-performing school. If SBE determines that a district has not made sufficient progress, the district remains in Required Action and must submit a new or revised plan. This accountability process has been funded by federal funds, but it is anticipated that there will not be federal funds made available this year for this purpose. If federal funds are not available, a Required Action plan is not required to be implemented.

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.

The Legislature has authorized SBE and OSPI to grant waivers for certain purposes, including for implementing:

- a local plan to provide an effective education system that is designed to enhance the educational program for each student;
- a plan for restructuring; and
- an innovation school or zone.

Summary of Bill: The Laboratory School Partnership (LSP) program is created for the Schools of Education at public four-year institutions of higher education to partner with the persistently lowest-achieving public K-12 schools to implement plans to accelerate student achievement and advance educator preparation.

Eligibility. A public school is eligible if it has been identified as a persistently low-achieving school and has not received any funds specifically for the purpose of implementing a school improvement plan. OSPI must create a list of schools that meet, or that met, by December 2011, the criteria to be a persistently lowest-achieving school, and it and notify the schools of their eligibility to participate in an LSP. OSPI must provide the list to SBE, Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and Office of Financial Management (OFM). PESB must send the list to each School of Education at the four-year institutions of higher education school of education. Washington independent institutions of higher education may participate if the public institution of higher education is the lead institution of higher education in LSP.

Application of Intent. SBE and PESB must jointly develop an application of intent, with specific components, for an eligible school and institution of higher education to form an LSP. SBE has approval authority for the student achievement portion of the application, and PESB has approval authority related to the educator preparation portion. Once the application of intent is approved, SBE and PESB must inform OFM. OFM must make available to LSP financial resources, if appropriated, for the development of an LSP plan.

LSP Plan. The LSP plan must be submitted to SBE and PESB by February 1, 2013. The plan must be developed in accordance with a specified process that includes at least one public hearing regarding the plan. It must identify OSPI and SBE waivers to be requested and provide other specified elements, including a timeline and progress benchmarks that address the planning year, implementing years, and the concluding school year of 2016-17. The plan must also identify and complete any needed collective bargaining procedures. For the school district, this includes reopening the agreement or negotiating an addendum to implement the plan; if the parties cannot reach agreement, then the procedures in current law for Required Action districts for a PERC mediator, and – if necessary – the Superior Court, must be followed to implement the plan.

LSP Plan Approval. SBE has approval authority for the student achievement portion of the plan, and PESB has approval authority for the educator preparation portion. Once an LSP plan is approved, SBE and PESB must inform OFM. OFM must make financial resources, if appropriated, available to LSP for implementation of an LSP plan. If SBE or PESB does not approve the LSP plan, then the board must notify the LSP in writing and explain why the

plan was not approved. LSP may submit a new LSP plan in accordance with a timeline provided.

Waivers. OSPI and SBE are authorized to grant the current available waivers to an LSP for implementation of an LSP plan. The waivers may be extended if LSP is extended in accordance with the process provided.

Data and Reporting. LSPs must provide data to OSPI, SBE, and PESB to comply with required reporting purposes, for evaluation purposes, and as otherwise requested. PESB must conduct an analysis of the data and establish strategies that assure longitudinal analysis of educator certificate candidate outcomes during and beyond LSP. By September 1, 2013, SBE and PESB must summarize certain data obtained and make any recommendations to the governor, Legislature, institutions of higher education, and school districts. Additional SBE and PESB annual reports are required, with a final report due by September 1, 2017.

LSP Plan Rescission or Modification. SBE and PESB annual recommendations may include a determination to rescind or modify the LSP plan based on a lack of expected results. If the plan is rescinded, then SBE and PESB must work with the school and school district to transition out of LSP. SBE and PESB must notify a school when it completes an LSP plan.

Continued Operation. An LSP may retain LSP status if the school district and the institution of higher education develop and agree to a revised plan to continue the school and teacher preparation program beyond the completion of the initial plan. The revised plan must be supported by grant funds. The revised plans must be updated and reapproved every five years. The school must notify SBE, PESB, and OSPI that LSP is continuing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2012.

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 overall goal is to leverage state resources and investments that have been made in the K-12 and higher education systems and to build on processes and projects that are working, such as the state accountability system for K-12 schools that uses federal funds. We believe this is an additional tool to continue the advancement of improving our schools. The legislation differs from the state accountability structure because it is voluntary, involves higher education institutions, and the schools do not have to use one of the four federal school intervention models. Some higher education institutions already have experience working with K-12 schools in discrete areas. This legislation intends to build on that and address school improvement in a holistic manner, while maintaining local control. This model of using teacher candidates to provide a positive impact on our struggling students builds on our alternative teacher certification programs, and this will strengthen the pipeline between educator preparation programs and school districts. We can test the strategies we are using to prepare our teachers and ensure that we are producing effective teachers. We are disappointed that only public higher education

institutions can be the lead institutions, because our private colleges are also innovators and could contribute to these partnerships. Our teacher candidates will be more successful because they will not be in a lecture-style classroom, but will be more involved with their learning. School administrators will want to hire these teachers because they already have experience with struggling students.

OTHER: Please include the option for private colleges to directly partner with low-performing schools. It is an exciting opportunity, and they would like the chance to participate in these partnerships.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Judy Hartmann, Governor's Policy Office; Jennifer Wallace, PESB; Jerry Bender, Assn. of School Principals; Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn.; and Marcia Fromhold, OSPI.

OTHER: Bob Cooper, WA Assn. of Colleges for Teacher Education.