

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5588

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As of February 7, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to the definition of school day.

**Brief Description:** Changing the definition of "school day."

**Sponsors:** Senators Litzow, Dammeier, Sheldon, Rivers, Fain and Tom.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/06/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Current state law does not provide a minimum number of hours in a school day. A school day is defined as each day of the school year on which pupils enrolled in the common schools of a school district are engaged in academic and career and technical instruction planned by, and under the direction of, the school.

The definition of instructional hours includes the hours students are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity planned by, and under the direction of, school district staff, as directed by the administration and board of directors of the district, inclusive of intermissions for class changes, recess, and teacher and parent-guardian conferences that are planned and scheduled by the district for the purpose of discussing students' educational needs or progress, and exclusive of time actually spent for meals.

**Summary of Bill:** A school day must have a minimum of six instructional hours. This cannot be waived by the State Board or the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Late start, early release of students, or partial days resulting in less than six instructional hours is prohibited unless the release is for a full school day.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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*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.*

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** CON: The ability to have half days with our teachers for professional development is important. If we want to improve instruction in our classroom, it means that teachers need the time to be able to grow, develop, and work with each other. Our community and parents understand the need for teachers to work together. To do this outside of the school day without additional funding is impossible. Our early release days have been carefully planned so that we use the time effectively – these are not wasted days. Big reforms like the common core standards, new student assessments, and new teacher evaluations require time for us to collaborate in professional communities and the late arrival time is important for that to occur. This is a slap in the face to educators because the Legislature asked schools and districts to make changes but then took away the state-funded learning improvement days when we could work on the changes. We don't want to short change our students but we need time to make changes. If the state funded collaborative time for teachers to work together then there would not be any shortened days. This bill does not allow for late starts because of inclement weather, which is a safety issue.

**Persons Testifying:** CON: Gene Sementi, Superintendent West Valley School District; Jim Kowalkowski, Superintendent Davenport School District; Kevin Chase, Grandview School District; Paul Farris, Ellensburg School District; Elaine Beraza, Lee Maras, Yakima School District; Mike Parker, Hoquiam School District; Holly Koon, Mount Baker School District.