

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6064

As of January 23, 2014

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

Brief Description: Requiring an analysis of how school districts use school days.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, Fain, Dammeier, Hobbs, Hill, Becker, Tom and Braun.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/22/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: The Washington Legislature created the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) in 1983 to conduct nonpartisan research for the Legislature.

The statutory 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 spent for meals. There is no statutory definition of classroom time, non-classroom time, non-instructional time, or other definitions of how the school day is divided or used.

Summary of Bill: WSIPP must conduct an analysis of how school districts use school days. To the extent that data is not available at the statewide level, WSIPP may use case studies or other methods to conduct the analysis. An initial report is due by December 1, 2014, and a final report is due by December 1, 2015.

The analysis must include the following:

- how school districts define classroom time, non-classroom time, instructional time, non-instructional time, and any other definitions of how the school day is divided or used;
- estimates of time in each category;
- when non-instructional hours occur;

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- how non-instructional hours are used, including how much of the non-instructional time is devoted to professional development for the purposes of teacher and principal evaluation training or common core state standards training; and
- the extent that the use of each category of time is identified or defined in collective bargaining agreements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: It is important to be informed about how school districts are using the days during the school year. This data is not currently reported at the state level. Research shows that the level of time provided for instruction is important in determining which schools will be effective and able to help students meet higher standards. The study should review student achievement data and determine whether there is a causal link between student achievement and the amount of quality professional development teachers receive. The study should also require legislators to spend a full day in a school to see how hard teachers, principals, and everyone in the schools are working. Central Washington University (CWU) is currently conducting a study to better understand the daily activities of teachers in public schools. CWU is willing to conduct this study as well. One of the challenges for school districts is the short timeline for implementing changes that are passed by the Legislature; for example, the increase of 1080 hours of instruction. Please keep the necessary implementation time in mind as you make changes. One way to get information from all the school districts is to get the nine Educational Service Districts to help gather the information from the school districts.

CON: We think this study should occur in every school district and should also determine how much of the professional development is paid for by state or local dollars.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Steve Litzow, prime sponsor, Jim Kowalkowski, Davenport School District & Rural Ed. Center; Steve DuPont, CWU; Jami Lund, Freedom Foundation; Jack Archer, State Board of Education; Randy Russell, Freeman School District.

CON: Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn.