

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6209

As of January 29, 2014

Title: An act relating to expanded learning opportunities.

Brief Description: Concerning expanded learning opportunities.

Sponsors: Senators Dammeier, Frockt, Hill, Rolfes, Billig, Chase and O'Ban.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/29/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Research shows that many students, especially students from low-income families, experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Studies have also documented that summer learning loss is cumulative over time and widens the existing educational opportunity gap. Some studies recommend participation in expanded learning opportunities (ELOs) during the school year and summer to mitigate summer learning loss and improve student academic performance, attendance, on-time grade advancement, and classroom behaviors.

Summary of Bill: ELOs are provided by community-based organizations outside the traditional school day, week, or year, using activities that complement classroom-based instruction, which may focus on academic and nonacademic areas. The ELO Council (Council) is established to advise the Governor, Legislature, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) on an ELO system. Up to 18 participants may be invited to participate in the Council, but the membership must include 13 representatives of specified entities. The Governor's Office with SPI must convene the Council. The Council must provide an annual report beginning December 1, 2014.

The Council must also provide a vision and guidance to support an ELO system, and other programs for early elementary through secondary education so that needs for a statewide, coordinated ELO system are identified and the system developed. The Council must identify fiscal, resource, and partnership opportunities, coordinate policy development, set quality standards, and develop a comprehensive ELO action plan to address summer learning loss, provide academic supports, build strong school and community-based organization

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partnerships, and track performance of ELOs in closing the opportunity gap. When making recommendations, the Council must consider the state menus of best practices to assist struggling students in English language arts, including intensive reading and literacy improvement for K-4 students; mathematics; and reducing disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2014.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Summer learning loss is a critical problem that we must address. Almost every student experiences summer learning loss; some more than others. Extended learning opportunities outside of the school day and the school calendar are so important because all students do not learn the same way or take the same amount of time to learn something. This Council will add value by coordinating a different set of partners to work with schools on the issue of summer learning loss. The Council also allows a way to share best practices. We recommend adding representatives of schools and school districts to the Council, including school principals and district board members; also consider adding a representative of the library system. It is important to have a group of people to coordinate academic access to students who need additional support outside the school day and the school year.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dammeier, prime sponsor; Jan Link, Director, Academic Link Outreach; Karyssa Mathison, Larry Wewel, Academic Link Outreach; Phyllis Frank, former State Board of Education member, National Assn. for Year-Round Education; Frank Ordway, League of Education Voters; Marie Sullivan, WA State School Directors Assn.; Alex Hur, Equity in Education Coalition; Lynne Tucker, School's Out WA; Jerry Bender, Assn. of WA School Principals; Helen Myrick, United Way of Pierce County; Julia Suliman, State Board of Education.