

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6336

As of January 30, 2014

Title: An act relating to promoting expanded learning opportunities as a strategy to close the educational opportunity gap and prevent summer learning loss.

Brief Description: Promoting expanded learning opportunities as a strategy to close the educational opportunity gap and prevent summer learning loss.

Sponsors: Senators Dammeier, Frockt, Hill, Billig, Kohl-Welles and Tom.

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.

Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the summer ELO grant program is established. The purpose of the grant program is to build capacity for partnerships between schools and community-based organizations to design and deliver evidence-based and innovative enrichment programs designed to prevent summer learning loss among disadvantaged students at risk of school failure or who are enrolled in low-performing schools that experience chronic opportunity gaps. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must identify criteria for the award of grants and prioritize the awards to the applications that have strong partnerships between schools and community-based organizations, serve large numbers of the target student population with the highest needs,

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have culturally responsive family and community engagement, and capacity building for communities with low-performing schools, pervasive poverty, cultural barriers, and geographic isolation. The grants must be awarded proportionally between community-based organizations, and school districts or educational service districts. The grants may be used for student transportation to and from the ELO programs. OSPI must evaluate the grant program and prepare a report every two years.

Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, OSPI must contract with a statewide nonprofit organization to build capacity for, promote, and sustain an expanded learning opportunities system and support implementation of the summer expanded learning opportunities grant program. The organization must have experience in building statewide capacity for partnerships between schools and community-based organizations. The organization must implement a statewide communications plan to enhance awareness of ELOs, leverage local and regional resources, coordinate an outreach campaign, and provide technical assistance. OSPI with the contracted organization must develop guidelines, templates, and frameworks that support model partnerships between schools and community-based organizations to support ELOs.

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: Summer learning loss is a critical problem that we must address. Almost every student experiences summer learning loss; some more than others. Studies show that two-thirds of most students' summer learning loss occurs in elementary school and disproportionately impacts students who already experience educational opportunity gaps. Many community-based programs already provide academic supports and are working with schools to align their programs with the educational program. Community-based programs provide safe environments outside of the school day where children can get help and have extra time for learning, and learning can be fun. School districts know that summer learning loss is a problem, but are struggling to provide summer programs to address it. These community-based programs can be the answer to the shortfalls in the educational system. A major barrier to accessing programs outside the school is often transportation, so we are glad to see that funds may be used for transportation. Funding for this program needs to be part of basic education; grants go away and the funding needs to be continued to fully address the problem.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dammeier, prime sponsor; Jan Link, Academic Link Outreach, Director; 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; Nola Renz, United Way of Pierce County; Julia Suliman, State Board of Education; Brianna Jackson, Community Day School Assn.