

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1164

As Reported by House Committee On: Capital Budget

Title: An act relating to equipment assistance grants to enhance student nutrition in public schools.

Brief Description: Creating a competitive equipment assistance grant program to enhance student nutrition in public schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Riccelli, DeBolt, Stanford, MacEwen, Santos, Reykdal, Holy, Tharinger, Gregerson, Appleton, Bergquist, Senn, Hawkins, Walkinshaw, Ormsby, Farrell, Tarleton, Haler and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Capital Budget: 2/6/15, 2/10/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a process to solicit and prioritize applications for an equipment assistance grant program to enhance student nutrition in public schools.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CAPITAL BUDGET

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Dunshee, Chair; Stanford, Vice Chair; DeBolt, Ranking Minority Member; Smith, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kilduff, Kochmar, Peterson, Riccelli and Walsh.

Staff: Christine Thomas (786-7142).

Background:

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, Washington received a one-time appropriation of approximately \$1.59 million for equipment assistance grants to be distributed competitively to local education agencies (LEAs) that sponsored a National School Lunch Program. The National School Lunch Program, established under the

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National School Lunch Act in 1946, is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions to provide nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to school children. Under the equipment assistance grant program, priority was given to the LEA's requesting equipment for schools in which at least 50 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-priced meals. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) received grant requests from the LEA's totaling \$11.6 million.

In September 2014 a strategic work group, including participants from the Office of the Governor, the OSPI, the Department of Health, the Department of Early Learning, and other stakeholders was created as part of the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative to focus on health, early learning, and K-12 environments. The work group recommended state policies that support community-led changes to provide choices for encouraging children to be more active and eat better. Two of the long-term recommendations that were made include supporting school districts in providing minimally processed foods in school meals and supporting schools to increase fresh vegetable and fruit consumption.

Summary of Bill:

The "Apple a Day" program, an equipment assistance grant program, is established to enhance student nutrition in public schools. "Equipment" is defined as articles of nonexpendable, tangible personal property with a useful life of at least 13 years and a per-unit cost of \$1,000, and may include the purchase of new equipment, renovation of existing equipment, or replacement equipment. Minor capital improvements required to accommodate the installation of equipment may also be eligible for state assistance.

The OSPI must establish a competitive process to solicit applications for state assistance and must evaluate and rank applications using objective criteria in consultation with an advisory committee of at least three members of selected organizations concerned with child nutrition, including one Washington School Nutrition Association representative and one representative from east of the crest of the Cascade mountains. Public school districts and public schools participating in the National School Breakfast Program or the National School Lunch Program are eligible to apply.

The OSPI must require applicants to demonstrate, at a minimum, the following:

- Use of the proposed equipment will enhance nutrition and improve student access to healthier foods. Applicants must submit current school menus and proposed menus using the requested equipment.
- Healthy eating and physical activity are actively promoted to students, parents, teachers, and the community.

In evaluating and ranking applications, the OSPI shall give funding priority to:

- public schools in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals;
- project applications in which equipment purchases will affect menu changes throughout an entire grade group or school district;

- project applications that provide a dollar-for-dollar match from non-state sources;
- public schools that can demonstrate nutrition is integrated into core curriculum areas such as math, science, language arts, physical education, and serving healthy Washington-grown food is incorporated into the schools wellness policy; and
- public schools that are engaged in farm-to-school efforts and support Washington farmers by purchasing Washington grown food when available.

In consultation with the advisory committee, the OSPI must develop and track specific, quantifiable outcome measures of the grant program. A preliminary report on the outcome measures must be submitted to the Legislature by January 1, 2016, and a final report on program outcomes by January 1, 2017.

If specific capital budget funding for this legislation is not provided by June 30, 2015, the act is null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Providing fresh produce from local farmers in schools is one approach to help school districts with populations of hungry and/or obese children. Opening up schools to local markets benefits both local family farmers and students. In order to deliver healthier meals, schools must have the equipment infrastructure to properly prepare and process large volumes of farm-raised produce. This bill provides support to schools motivated to upgrade their kitchen infrastructure, incorporate healthy Washington-grown foods into their wellness policies, and support Washington farmers to meet the growing demand for healthier food in public schools. Scratch cooking or modified scratch cooking can be accomplished at similar costs with the right equipment.

(Opposed) Rather than supporting school nutrition equipment grants, the priority of the state in regards to public school facility needs should be focused on delivering basic education. One way to help deliver basic education is by providing public school building capacity to reduce kindergarten through third grade class sizes and provide classroom space for all day kindergarten enrollments.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Riccelli, prime sponsor; Ellen Gray, Washington Sustainable Food and Farm Network; Jan Holmer, Wenatchee School District; Michael Simon, Applecart Farms; Mitch Denning, Alliance of Education Association; Leeda Beha and Lisa Chatterton, Washington State School Nutrition Association; and Charlie Brown, Franklin Pierce School District.

(Opposed) Gordon Beck, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.