

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1408

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to developing a definition and model for "family engagement coordinator" and other terms used interchangeably with it.

Brief Description: Concerning the development of a definition and model for "family engagement coordinator" and other terms used interchangeably with it.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Magendanz, Sawyer, Santos, Senn, Robinson, Orwall, Tarleton, Bergquist and Gregerson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/2/15, 2/19/15 [DPS], 1/11/16, 1/14/16 [DP2S].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/15, 88-9.

Passed House: 1/27/16, 77-20.

Passed Senate: 3/4/16, 43-3.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Requires the Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO) to work with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) to recommend to the Legislature a definition for the term that is variously referred to as "family engagement coordinator," "parent and family engagement coordinator," and "parent involvement coordinator," and a model or framework for such a staff position.
- Requires the OEO and the EOGOAC to collaborate with certain entities in developing the model or framework.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Ortiz-Self, Vice Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Magendanz, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Stambaugh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist,

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Caldier, Griffey, Hargrove, Harris, S. Hunt, Kilduff, Kuderer, Orwall, Pollet, Rossetti and Springer.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Hayes and Klippert.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative McCaslin.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

The Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO), within the Office of the Governor, was established in 2006 to be independent from the public education system. The OEO resolves complaints impartially and confidentially and works with parents, students, schools, and district staff to find collaborative solutions focusing on the student's best interest. The OEO also collects data and makes public policy recommendations, promotes family engagement in education, and identifies strategies to close the achievement gap.

The Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) was created in 2009 to address the achievement gap in Washington's public schools. The committee is tasked with recommending to the educational agencies specific policies and strategies to:

- support and facilitate parent and community involvement and outreach;
- enhance the cultural competency of current and future educators and the cultural relevance of curriculum and instruction;
- expand pathways and strategies to prepare and recruit diverse teachers and administrators;
- recommend current programs and resources that should be redirected to narrow the gap;
- identify data elements and systems needed to monitor progress in closing the gap;
- make closing the achievement gap part of the school and school district improvement process; and
- explore innovative school models that have shown success in closing the achievement gap.

A variety of initiatives across the state and across the country focus on encouraging parents, guardians, and families to understand and demonstrate the importance of education, to participate in their student's learning process, and to become involved in school activities. Beginning in September 2018, the prototypical school model will include funding for one "parent involvement coordinator" per prototypical elementary, middle, and high school.

A graduation coach is a staff person who works with the school counselors to identify and provide intervention services to students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school or of not graduating on time. A report published by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in 2013 describes a model policy that defines the skill sets and responsibilities of graduation coaches.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill:

By December 1, 2016, the OEO must collaborate with the EOGOAC to recommend to the Legislature:

- a definition for the term that is variously referred to as "family engagement coordinator," "parent and family engagement coordinator," and "parent involvement coordinator;" and
- a model or framework for such a staff position.

In developing the model or framework for the staff position, the OEO and the EOGOAC must collaborate with: the OSPI, the Washington Education Association, the Public School Employees of Washington, the Washington School Counselors' Association, the Association of Washington School Principals, and the Washington State School Directors' Association.

The section expires July 1, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It is important for the families of students to communicate with the students' teachers and school staff. The students of families who do not speak English often give up on the educational system because of the lack of communication and relationship building. If the Legislature does not believe that family engagement is important for our students, it should consider situations where families believe that their students are doing well because that is what their students tell them, even when the students are failing.

There is a gap in reaching out to the most vulnerable and disenfranchised families. There needs to be a framework and model to determine how to best reach the most disenfranchised families. If this type of system is in place, everyone will benefit. The OEO was created to work directly with students and families in schools in order to solve problems. It has a great deal of experience and knowledge on involving families in the education system and knows what is going on around the state, so it is a good agency to head this effort. The OEO and the EOGOAC are the two entities whose main focus is helping disenfranchised students. The EOGOAC also has as members a representative of the OSPI and one from each of the state ethnic commissions, which will allow this issue to be addressed from both the community and the parent perspectives.

There are existing staff positions with the titles listed in the bill all across the state, primarily in federal programs, such as Title I Part C, Migrant, and Title III Second Language Acquisition. Some districts fund these positions with state basic education dollars. The OSPI participated in designing these positions, and would like to be a primary collaborator

on the task force described in the bill. Also, the task force should have parent groups involved.

Currently, the OSPI does a lot to involve parents, particularly in Migrant and Second Language Acquisition programs. Trainings are done annually for parents and staff, with parents helping design the programs for parents to ensure that the programs are responsive to how families want staff to work with their children.

There are organizations that provide technical assistance to schools to help them engage parents and families, and that help parents become engaged in the education of their children. The children of families who are engaged do better and are more likely to pursue higher education. This is very important to families where English is not the primary language, and for other disenfranchised families.

It is great that the Legislature is starting the process to understand the value and role that parents play in public education. It is important to begin the process of setting up a structure and standards for partnering for the success of the children. Some organizations would encourage the committee to pursue this further and acknowledge the importance of family engagement in education.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ortiz-Self, prime sponsor; Gil Mendoza, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Adie Simmons, Washington State Family Engagement Trust.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.