

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1760

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to providing students with skills that promote mental health and well-being and increase academic performance.

Brief Description: Providing students with skills that promote mental health and well-being and increase academic performance.

Sponsors: Representatives Senn, Magendanz, Orwall, Stambaugh, Ortiz-Self, Kagi, Sells, Tharinger, Reykdal, Jinkins, Muri, Goodman, Riccelli, Robinson, Pollet, McBride and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/12/15, 2/17/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to convene a work group to develop and recommend: benchmarks for developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning that build upon the work that is being done in early learning.
- Specifies the make-up of the work group and requires a report by December 1, 2016.
- Tasks Educational Service Districts with developing and maintaining the capacity to serve as convener, trainer, and mentor for educators and other school district staff.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Ortiz-Self, Vice Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Magendanz, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member;

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Stambaugh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Fagan, Gregory, Griffey, Hargrove, S. Hunt, Kilduff, Lytton, McCaslin, Orwall, Pollet and Springer.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Hayes and Klippert.

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) develops the state's learning standards for students and oversees the assessment of the learning standards for state and federal accountability purposes. There are learning standards for a number of content areas, including health and fitness. The health and fitness standards establish the concepts and skills necessary for safe and healthy living, and include analysis and evaluation of the impact of real-life influences on health.

In 2010 the Department of Early Learning (DEL), the OSPI, and Thrive by Five Washington reviewed and revised the early learning and development benchmarks, which they published as the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines. These guidelines include information about social and emotional learning (SEL) and development for parents, teachers, and other adults that support children in grades K–3.

With the passage of Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1336 in 2013, mental health needs of students were highlighted and new certification and training requirements were put in place for school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses. As part of that legislation, each Educational Service District (ESD) was required to develop and maintain the capacity to offer training on youth suicide screening and referral, and on recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students. Training may be offered on a fee-for-service basis or at no cost if funds are available.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The OSPI must convene a work group to recommend comprehensive benchmarks for developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning, for grades kindergarten through high school, that build upon the work that is being done in early learning. These benchmarks must include, at every grade level, competencies for at least the following:

- self management;
- self awareness;
- social awareness;
- relationship skills; and
- responsible decision making.

The work group must also develop guidance that is culturally competent and linguistically appropriate, provides a positive learning environment, involves parents, and promotes school safety and a positive school climate. Technical advice required of the work group must focus

upon how the interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning fit within existing teacher and principal evaluations, particularly as it relates to school safety and school climate. Finally, the work group must develop an implementation plan that provides a framework for incorporation that is aligned with other state initiatives including college and career readiness, STEM education, twenty-first century skills, and the state's learning standards.

To inform of the work group, the OSPI must conduct a survey of schools to ascertain how many schools in the state are teaching interpersonal and decision making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning and to understand individual districts' capacity for implementation.

The work group must be composed of persons with expertise in interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning, child development, job readiness, and mental health, as well as representatives from the following:

- the Department of Early Learning;
- student support services and teaching and learning departments within the OSPI;
- the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee;
- the Office of the Education Ombuds;
- higher education faculty with expertise in social and emotional learning;
- currently employed K-12 educator and K-12 administrator;
- a mental health counselor;
- a school counselor, social worker, and psychologist; and
- a school parent organization.

The work group may also include one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, and one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Whether or not a member from a caucus will be appointed is to be determined by that caucus.

The work group must consult with: school districts; educational service districts (ESDs); school administrators; principals; teachers; paraeducators; school counselors; community organizations serving youth; a statewide organization with expertise in interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning; federally recognized tribes, state ethnic commissions representing African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islander Americans; and community organizations representing communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, parents and students, and homeless children and youth.

A report is due to the education committees of the Legislature, the Governor, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction by October 1, 2016. The report must include recommendations with respect to benchmarks, guidance, technical advice and an implementation plan. The OSPI must make the report available to school districts via its website.

In addition to the provision of training required by House Bill 1336 with respect to responding to emotional or behavioral distress in students, the ESDs must develop and

maintain the capacity to serve as convener, trainer, and mentor for educators and other school district staff on SEL. The ESD may work with school districts to create a training model that works best for each school district and ESD. An ESD may demonstrate capacity by employing staff with sufficient expertise to offer the training or by contracting with individuals or organizations to offer the training. Training shall be offered at no cost to school districts or educators if funds are appropriated specifically for this purpose or made available through grants or other sources.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The terminology was changed, so that references to "social and emotional learning" are now references to "developmentally appropriate interpersonal and decision-making knowledge and skills of social and emotional learning."

A school counselor, social worker and psychologist were added to the work group. It is allowed, but not required, that a legislative member from each caucus of both the House of Representatives and Senate be appointed to the work group.

A section was stricken that:

- provided that school districts may use funding for materials, supplies, and operating costs to develop and update specific action plans to implement multitiered systems of support frameworks, including positive behavior interventions and supports and social and emotional learning, and curriculum aligned with the frameworks; and
- required district developed plans to be submitted to the OSPI annually, and the OSPI to make these available on its web site.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is timely, in that it deals with education as well as mental health, at a time when the state is facing lawsuits regarding both. What this bill seeks to provide is mental wellness from the outset, that will be with children for the rest of their lives. Social and emotional learning is important. Self regulation is the best predictor of happiness. The five benchmarks are supported. Social and emotional learning will help build confidence, resiliency, and mental health. Educators can improve a child's chances of success. Businesses want workers who are educated and have technical skills and are able to get along, cooperate, stay motivated, and have initiative. The Foundations program, used in the Franklin Pierce School District, is an example of what is identified in the bill. Since

implementation, the district has seen a dramatic reduction in suspensions and improved attendance. This bill is a good first step.

The learning of students in the classroom can be disrupted by other students that are being disrespectful. Social and emotional learning knowledge and skills allow students to put more of their focus on learning. As has been said, "Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make children more human." Students experience a lot of stress. This increases when they move from elementary to middle school where they have to report to several teachers. School should be a positive environment for everyone, no matter where they come from. Everyone needs to be more empathetic and compassionate. In one class project, a student heard stories from other students that indicated that many were focused on suicide, violence, and drugs. Social and emotional learning can prevent students from being picked on. About 43 percent of children in each classroom have experienced at least three adverse childhood experiences. Increasing student and community engagement is beneficial. It requires a commitment between everyone.

School psychologists should be on the workgroup, as they are uniquely qualified with respect to SEL and mental health needs. They have the appropriate expertise and can work with social workers, counselors, and homeless liaisons to provide a continuum of services. Social workers should be on the work group, and already have the SEL expertise.

(In support with concerns) The bill is supported, but there are concerns about funding. There is already a committee at the OSPI that is working on this.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Senn, prime sponsor; Carrie Suchy, Washington State Association of School Psychologists; Beth Nelson, Washington State Association of School Social Workers; Kristi Shafer, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Lance Goodpaster, Franklin Pierce School District; Brynn Brady, Zane Thorton, Abigail Gerken, Aengus Adams, Pacific Middle School Ambassadors; Pam Kilborn-Miller, Compassionate Schools Development Group; and Tina McDaniel, Tacoma School District.

(In support with concerns) Christie Perkins, Northwest Postitive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.