

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1345

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 31, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to adopting a definition and standards of professional learning.

**Brief Description:** Adopting a definition and standards of professional learning.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Lytton, Magendanz and Bergquist.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/05/15, 91-7.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/19/15, 3/31/15 [DPA, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Fain, Hill, Mullet and Rivers.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Billig and Rolfes.

**Staff:** Matthew Lemon (786-7405)

**Background:** Professional Learning. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) conducted meta-analyses of research on various approaches to professional development for teachers. WSIPP found that professional development that is not targeted, defined as providing more time and funding for activities such as workshops, conferences, summer institutes, and time set aside during the school year for staff development without directing how those resources are used, does not increase student achievement, on average, and does not have a positive benefit-cost ratio.

However, WSIPP found that other approaches to teacher professional development can increase student achievement, on average, and have positive benefit-cost ratios. These approaches include the following:

- Targeted Professional Development. Targeted professional development focuses on improving teaching in a particular content area such as reading, math, and science, and/or in a particular grade level. Most targeted programs in WSIPP's analysis included a summer institute in addition to training provided during the regular school year.

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*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.*

- Professional Development on the Use of Data to Guide Instruction. Professional development on the use of data to guide instruction involves training teachers on how to use student academic assessment data to improve instruction. This type of professional development is usually paired with computer software that tracks and reports student assessment data to teachers.
- Teacher Coaching. Teacher coaching is a form of job-embedded professional development. These programs typically assign a full-time, trained teacher to an individual school to serve as a coach. Generally, coaches work directly with classroom teachers one on one or in small groups to help them improve their instructional strategies. Coaches observe teaching, provide individual feedback, engage in co-teaching sessions, model effective instructional practices, and provide workshops.

WSIPP rated each of the three approaches above as "evidence-based" in a recent inventory of evidence and research-based practices, activities, and programs for use in Washington's Learning Assistance Program. In the same inventory, WSIPP rated professional learning communities, teacher induction and mentoring programs, and online professional development and coaching programs as either research-based or promising practices.

Teacher and Principal Evaluations. Aspects of performance evaluations for certificated employees are specified in statute, including minimum evaluation criteria and the requirement that performance rated as not satisfactory is subject to a probationary period and, if performance does not improve, a finding of probable cause for nonrenewal. An employee whose work is judged not satisfactory must be notified in writing of the specific areas of deficiencies along with a reasonable program for improvement.

Legislation enacted in 2010 directed the development of a revised evaluation system for teachers and principals. The revised evaluation system includes eight evaluation criteria, a four-level rating system ranging from unsatisfactory to distinguished, and must include data on student growth, defined as the change in student achievement between two points in time, as a factor. Evaluations must be performed annually. Beginning no later than the 2013-14 school year, each district adopted an implementation schedule that transitions all teachers and principals to the new evaluation system no later than the 2015-16 school year.

Elements of Student Growth Data. In current law, student growth data that must be a factor in teacher and principal evaluations must be based on multiple measures that can include classroom-based, school-based, district-based, and state-based tools. Student growth data elements may include the teacher's performance as a member of a grade level, subject matter, or other instructional team within a school. Student growth data may also include the teacher's performance as a member of the overall instructional team of a school when relevant and appropriate.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)/Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver. Under the federal NCLB/ESEA, schools and districts that receive federal Title I funds must meet an adequate yearly progress (AYP) target for all students in reading and mathematics. The targets call for a 100 percent student proficiency rate in both subjects beginning in 2014. Schools and districts that do not meet AYP targets for student proficiency are subject to sanctions. The sanctions include a requirement that the school notify parents that the AYP

goal has not been met and a requirement that 20 percent of the school or district's Title I funds must be set aside to provide transportation to students who transfer out of the school or district and to provide supplemental education services such as tutoring. For the 2014-15 fiscal year, the statewide total amount set aside was approximately \$39 million.

Washington obtained a waiver from these requirements in 2012. In a letter from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), which was received by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) on August 14, 2013, ED designated Washington's waiver of certain provisions of NCLB/ESEA to be at high-risk status and directed Washington to seek legislative change to require the use of federally required state test scores as one of the measures of student growth in the state's teacher and principal evaluations. The 2014 Legislature did not make any legislative changes and ED subsequently revoked Washington's waiver in April 2014.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): Professional Learning.** The Legislature's intent is to adopt a statewide definition of effective professional learning and that each public school district should establish targeted, sustained, and relevant professional learning opportunities that meet the definition and are aligned to state and district goals.

The term professional learning is defined to mean a comprehensive, sustained, job-embedded, and collaborative approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement. It also fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance and must comprise learning that is aligned with student learning needs, educator development needs, and school district or state improvement goals. It must have as its primary focus the improvement of teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness in assisting all students to meet the state learning standards.

Professional learning must incorporate differentiated, coherent, sustained, and evidence-based strategies that improve educator effectiveness and student achievement, including job-embedded coaching or other forms of assistance to support educators' transfer of new knowledge and skills into their practice.

Professional learning should include the work of collaborative teams engaged in a cycle of professional improvement focused on identifying student and educator learning needs using multiple sources of data including teacher and principal evaluations; defining clear goals; continually assessing effectiveness; using formative and summative measures; and alignment with individual, team, school, district, and state goals. Facilitation of professional learning should be by well-prepared school and district leaders including curriculum specialists, administrators, principals, coaches, mentors, master teachers, and other teacher leaders. Professional learning may be supported by external experts.

Standards are specified for the content, process, and context of professional learning and definitions are provided for the following terms: differentiated, which includes student growth as described in teacher and principal evaluations; job-embedded; student outcomes, which includes student growth as described in teacher and principal evaluations; and sustained.

Teacher and Principal Evaluations. Beginning no earlier than the 2017-18 school year, student results from the relevant federally mandated statewide student assessments must be used as one of the multiple measures of student growth in performance evaluations for certain teachers and principals who are assigned to a class or school in which reading, language arts, or mathematics are taught in at least one of the grades in which the mandated assessments are administered. The methodology of using the assessment results in the evaluations must be subject to collective bargaining.

The results must only be used in the evaluations once OSPI and the steering committee for the Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project have determined that the assessments meet professionally accepted standards for being a valid and reliable tool for measuring student growth and have certified that using the assessments as one of the multiple measures of student growth will strengthen and not undermine the existing teacher and principal evaluation system. OSPI must provide districts with the relevant state-level assessment information necessary to determine student growth for the purposes of teacher and principal evaluations.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments):** The striking amendment maintains the provisions of the bill related to defining and specifying characteristics of professional learning; specifying standards for the content, process, and context of professional learning; and defining several terms, while making the following changes and additions:

- specifies that the multiple sources of data that are used to identify student and educator learning needs for the purpose of professional learning and improvement include teacher and principal evaluations under RCW 28A.405.100;
- the term student growth data as used in the definitions in section 4 means student growth data as described under RCW 28A.405.100;
- beginning no earlier than the 2017-18 school year, student results from the relevant federally mandated statewide student assessments must be used as one of the multiple measures of student growth for certain teacher and principal evaluations under RCW 28A.405.100;
- the methodology of using the assessment results in the evaluations must be subject to collective bargaining and the results must only be used once OSPI and the steering committee have determined that the assessments meet professionally accepted standards for being a valid and reliable tool for measuring student growth and have certified that using the assessments as one of the multiple measures of student growth will strengthen and not undermine the existing teacher and principal evaluation system;
- OSPI must provide to districts the relevant state-level assessment information necessary to determine student growth for the purposes of teacher and principal evaluations; and
- makes grammatical corrections.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on House Bill:** PRO: Teachers need professional learning opportunities that meet both their needs as educators and the needs of their students. Educators and the public support high-quality professional learning to help students and teachers address new standards and support learning in a variety of subjects. Effective professional learning cannot be accomplished through short one-time trainings. Professional learning must be sustained over time in a coherent and aligned fashion in order to promote change. Teachers must have the support to work collaboratively and it takes time, commitment, and clear goals to improve professional learning. This bill establishes that students and educators should be evaluated using multiple sources of data; ensures the use of formative and summative assessments to assess the effectiveness of professional learning; defines students outcomes to include both academic and non-academic measures; and ties professional learning to the state's goals, priorities, and academic learning standards. The bill supports the type of professional learning that will result in a positive return on investment.

The bill is grounded in research about the most effective ways that educators learn including results from WSIPP which show this approach will result in better outcomes for students. This is an important step in ensuring that educators are given the opportunity to access evidence and research-based professional learning strategies. The bill is widely supported by teachers, principals, central office staff, and other individuals who are familiar with the most effective practices for supporting teachers. Currently each district across the state has its own view on what professional learning looks like but there should be consistency. This bill sets the policy foundation to support a consistent, systemic, and structural approach to professional learning across the state and will promote equity in access to and the practice of professional learning. A common definition of effective professional learning can help districts assess programs and opportunities they plan to offer, and can help the State Board of Education to assess the quality of district requests for instructional-day waivers.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Rachel Johnson, Sumner School District, Teacher; Paige Folsom, Clover Park School District, Lakewood; Jessica Vavrus, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Jene Jones, League of Education Voters; Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn.; Janis Avery, State Board of Education; Caroline King, WA STEM.

**Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.