

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6368

As of February 11, 2016

Title: An act relating to creating a pilot project to provide middle and junior high school students strategic and intentional academic support beyond the traditional school day to promote accountability and responsibility.

Brief Description: Creating a pilot project to provide middle and junior high school students strategic and intentional academic support beyond the traditional school day to promote accountability and responsibility.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, Pearson, Jayapal, McCoy, Hasegawa, McAuliffe, Darneille and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/01/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: In 2014, the Legislature defined "expanded learning opportunities" as school-based programs or community-based programs provided in partnership with schools that provide extended learning and enrichment for students beyond the traditional school day, week, or calendar. Additionally, an Expanded Learning Opportunities Council was established to provide guidance for a statewide expanded learning opportunities system.

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) administers federal, state, and local grant and loan programs.

The United States Internal Revenue Code exempts nonprofit organizations from some federal income taxes when the organization's purpose is charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering amateur sports competition, or preventing cruelty to children or animals.

Summary of Bill: A pilot project is established to create after-school learning labs in public middle and junior high schools. Learning lab means an after-school program that provides additional academic support to middle or junior high school students. A learning lab is housed in a room with computer access such as a library or computer room in a public

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middle or junior high school building and is led by a lab director. Lab director means a part-time independent contractor who may hold a teaching certificate. The lab director supervises and is responsible for a learning lab. The lab director plays an active role in supporting student achievement through grade monitoring, rewarding success, and creating an academic culture.

The four-year pilot project must start at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year and end at the conclusion of the 2019-20 school year. The purpose of the pilot project is to provide middle and junior high school students with an organized and consistent learning environment to help them meet or exceed grade level standards, obtain the skills to be successful high school students, and be well prepared for postsecondary education.

Commerce must administer the pilot project. No more than 4 percent of the funding provided for the pilot project may be used by Commerce for administrative purposes.

An after-school academic support entity must implement the pilot project in a county located west of the crest of the Cascade mountains with a total population between 700,000 and 800,000 people to establish learning labs in that county's public middle and junior high schools. After-school academic support entity means an entity that is exempt from taxation under the United States Internal Revenue Code and that works with public middle or junior high schools to provide after-school academic support to students beyond the traditional school day within the schools. Middle and junior high schools participating in the pilot project must agree to partner with the after-school academic support entity.

Each middle or junior high school participating in the pilot project must have a learning lab that is open to students from after school until 6pm each day that school is in session unless this time has to be adjusted for the school calendar.

Each middle or junior high school participating in the pilot project must have a lab director. The lab director must be contracted with district input, trained, and supported by the after-school academic support entity that implements the pilot project. This training must include the following topics:

- involving parents and guardians;
- monitoring grades and state test scores;
- recognizing student academic improvement; and
- recruiting and training learning lab volunteers.

Starting August 1, 2017, and each August 1st thereafter, Commerce with the after-school academic support entity that implements the pilot project must submit an annual progress report regarding the pilot project to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature. The final report must be submitted by August 1, 2020 and must include a recommendation on whether the pilot project should be continued, expanded, or discontinued.

The provisions establishing this pilot project are set to expire June 30, 2021.

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: Learning labs will help middle school students, families, and staff with getting students ready for high school. Providing academic support in middle school is important to help students transition into the secondary grades. Learning labs provide a safe and consistent place for students to get extra academic support. Providing support for middle school students is preventative and addresses issues before it is too late. Teachers are frustrated because students come to the classrooms at many different levels. Students must learn how to be responsible and develop self-confidence to ask for help when needed. Learning labs connect students with mentors who can provide individualized support to bring students up to grade-level. Learning labs are supported by a lab director, and student and community volunteers. Learning labs can help families learn how they can help and support their children. Learning labs can help the students who are slipping through the system and make sure that schools are not segregated. Funding a pilot would provide a chance to prove whether the learning lab model can work statewide.

OTHER: Tutoring is an effective way of catching children up in school. This type of state-funded program could help replace federal funding that has been phased out. The State should be a partner with other public and private organizations when funding after-school programs. The Expanded Learning Opportunities Council has recommendations about funding on a broader systems level. There are many after-school programs that are doing good work.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; Jan Link, Academic Link Outreach; Victoria Tyron, student; Karyssa Mathison, Academic Link Outreach; Jean Goodrich, retired teacher; Julie Green, citizen; Majida Sbai, parent; Adam Sbai, student; Larry Wewel, Academic Link Outreach; Leslie Mix, citizen; Lani Nickell, citizen.

OTHER: Liv Finne, Washington Policy Center; David Beard, School's Out Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.