

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5696

As of February 15, 2017

Title: An act relating to breakfast after the bell programs in certain public schools.

Brief Description: Concerning breakfast after the bell programs.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Fain, Warnick, Walsh, Zeiger, Keiser, Carlyle, Pedersen, Conway, Chase and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/16/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that student participation in breakfast after the beginning of the school day must be considered instructional hours if students are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Free and Reduced-Price Meals. School breakfast and lunch programs are subsidized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the state, and student co-pays based on family income. In order for students to qualify for free meals, their families' income must be at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level. Students whose families have income between 130 percent and 185 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for reduced price meals. For the period of July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$31,590 for a family of four; 185 percent is \$44,955.

State Support for Breakfast. The Legislature has appropriated state funds specifically to support school breakfasts by:

- eliminating breakfast co-pays for students eligible for reduced-price meals;
- reimbursing school districts for school breakfasts served to students eligible for free and reduced-price meals; and
- providing assistance to school districts for new and expanding breakfast programs.

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.

Instructional Hours. Under the program of basic education, school districts must provide a specified minimum number of instructional hours per year, which are defined as those hours during which students are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity planned by, and under the direction of, school district staff. Time actually spent on meals does not count under the definition.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): If all students in a school are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity planned by and under the direction of school district staff concurrently with the consumption of breakfast, the period of time designated for student participation in breakfast after the beginning of the school day must be considered instructional hours.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute: PRO: Significant numbers of families live in poverty. Many children go to school hungry, and hungry children are not able to focus on learning. Washington State ranks low for serving breakfast to low-income students. Making breakfast part of the school day, like lunch, increases low-income students' participation in free and reduced-price breakfast. Serving breakfast at school has many benefits including lowering absenteeism and behavior problems and raising math and reading scores. When schools are able to serve more meals, it helps schools reach an economy of scale and be more efficient. This bill provides a first step because it allows schools that want to serve breakfast in the classroom to do so and to count as instructional hours. Breakfast in the classroom can work smoothly; children can be on task with their learning while eating. Many agencies are ready to become active partners in making sure all children have access to food, so they can be strong learners.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Claire Lane, Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition; Heather Linberg, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Helen McGovern-Pilant, Emergency Food Network; Theresa Mc Donald Evans, homeschool mom; Mitch Denning, Alliance of Educational Associations; Nick Federici, United Way of King County and United Ways of the Pacific NW.

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