

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6474

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As of February 1, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to creating a pilot project for tribal compact schools that accommodates cultural and agricultural events in school attendance requirements.

**Brief Description:** Creating a pilot project for tribal compact schools.

**Sponsors:** Senators McCoy, Sheldon, Chase, Conway, Frockt, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Palumbo, Rolfes, Saldaña and Van De Wege.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/30/18.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates a pilot project for Tribal Compact Schools to explore and implement options with respect to: school attendance and calendar requirements; accommodating cultural and agricultural events; and replacing graduating testing requirements with culturally relevant and community-based standards.

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

**Staff:** Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

**Background:** Tribal Compact Schools. The Legislature authorized the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to enter into state-tribal education compacts in 2013. The schools created by these compacts (Tribal Compact Schools) are exempt from existing statutes and rules regarding school administration, and are subject to the terms agreed upon between the tribes and OSPI.

While Tribal Compact Schools are exempt from most state educational statutes, the compacts generally contain provisions that the schools will follow state curriculum and calendar standards set in Washington law.

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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.*

There are currently six operating Tribal Compact Schools: Chief Kitsap Academy (Suquamish), Lummi Nation Schools, Muckleshoot Tribal School, Quileute Tribal School, and Wa He Lut Indian School.

Washington School Attendance and Calendar Requirements. Washington State requires schools to have a minimum of 180 instructional days per school year. However, schools may submit a request for a waiver from this requirement for purposes of economy and efficiency. In addition, Washington law provides that a child may be excused from school without penalty for a reason of faith or conscience, or an organized religious activity.

**Summary of Bill:** A pilot project is established for Tribal Compact Schools to explore and implement options with respect to:

- school attendance and calendar requirements for the purposes of accommodating cultural and agricultural events; and
- replacing graduation testing requirements with culturally relevant and community-based standards.

Various options in implementation of the project include, but are not limited to:

- obtaining waivers to the 180-day calendar requirement;
- counting student participation in cultural or agricultural programs as instructional days or as excused absences; and
- expanding the two-day limit of excused absences.

Tribal Compact Schools participating in the project must submit a report to the Legislature every four years and include a recommendation on whether the project should be modified, continued, or expanded. The pilot project shall expire August 1, 2030.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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:** PRO: Much learning for tribal students occurs outside of the classroom, often in conjunction with cultural events. Having a pilot project for Tribal Compact Schools would provide an opportunity to have flexible requirements to accommodate cultural activities.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator John McCoy, Prime Sponsor; Gayle Pauley, OSPI Assistant Superintendent, Special Programs and Federal Accountability.

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