

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6474

C 290 L 18
Synopsis as Enacted

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

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McCoy, Sheldon, Chase, Conway, Frockt, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Palumbo, Rolfes, Saldaña and Van De Wege).

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Education

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.

There are currently five 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: OSPI must establish a pilot project for one or more Tribal Compact Schools to implement modifications to school requirements 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.

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.

Tribal compact schools that apply to participate in the pilot project must be included. If requested, OSPI must convene a government-to-government meeting with the Tribal Compact School for the purpose of revising the compact to reflect the terms of the pilot project. Students attending a school participating in the pilot project are exempt from the obligation to earn a certificate of academic achievement.

Schools participating in the pilot project may:

- request a waiver to the 180-day calendar requirement;
- request authorization to consider student participation in cultural or agricultural programs as instructional days or as excused absences; and
- consider and implement other modifications to requirements, to the maximum extent permitted by state and federal law.

Tribal Compact Schools participating in the project must submit a report to the Legislature every two years and include a recommendation on whether the project should be modified, continued, or expanded. The pilot project shall expire August 1, 2023.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	44	3	
House	86	11	(House amended)
Senate	44	5	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2018