

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2637

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to school library information and technology programs.

Brief Description: Expanding school library information and technology programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Harris, Steele, Doglio, Rude, Goodman, Stokesbary, Bergquist, Stonier, Fitzgibbon, Callan, Thai, Valdez, Hudgins, Gregerson, Leavitt, Pollet and Riccelli.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/28/20, 2/6/20 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to oversee school library information and technology (SLIT) programs by performing specified minimum activities, such as identifying a point of contact at the OSPI to respond to SLIT inquiries and analyzing data related to the implementation of SLIT programs.
- Requires that school districts have a policy that acknowledges the requirement to provide every student with access to SLIT programs and procedures that describe how students can access SLIT resources and materials.
- Requires the OSPI to provide reports to the Legislature with information about and recommendations to improve SLIT programs, and with the results of a study on the benefits of SLIT programs and teacher-librarians on student educational outcomes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Steele, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz,

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.

Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Callan, Corry, Harris, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Stonier, Thai, Valdez and Ybarra.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Educational Technology Literacy and Technology Fluency Goals and Standards. One of the four goals of basic education is to provide every student opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills essential to think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate technology literacy and fluency as well as different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems.

The state learning standards and grade level expectations for educational technology literacy and technology fluency identify the knowledge and skills that all public school students need to know and be able to do in the areas of technology and technology literacy. Classroom and project-based assessments are available to evaluate students' educational technology fluency. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reports annually to the Legislature with the number of school districts that volunteer to use these assessments.

School Library and Information Technology Programs. Every board of directors is required to provide resources and materials for the operation of school library information and technology (SLIT) programs as the board deems necessary for the proper education of the district's students or as otherwise required by law or rule of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). A school-based SLIT program is staffed by a teacher-librarian and provides a broad, flexible array of services, resources, and instruction that support student mastery of the state learning standards in all subject areas and the implementation of the district's school improvement plan.

Teacher-Librarians. A teacher-librarian is a certificated teacher with a library media endorsement. The teacher-librarian, through the SLIT program, must collaborate as an instructional partner to help all students meet the content goals in all subject areas, and assist high school students completing high school and beyond plans required for graduation.

The prototypical school funding formula allocates funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support a "prototypical" school. School districts have discretion over how these state funds are spent, subject to some limits under the formula: the prototypical school funding formula provides an allocation of one teacher-librarian for every 603 full-time equivalent (FTE) elementary school students; one for every 832 FTE middle school students; and one for every 1,147 FTE high school students.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The SPI must oversee SLIT programs by doing the following seven activities, at a minimum:

- identifying a single point of contact at the OSPI to respond to library information and technology inquiries;
- providing technical assistance on establishing SLIT programs within existing funds to schools that do not have SLIT programs, beginning with Title I schools;
- gathering and analyzing data related to the implementation of SLIT programs and the assessment of students' educational technology literacy and technology fluency;
- assisting public schools with the effective implementation of SLIT programs;
- supporting public schools in evaluating how they are providing opportunities for every student to meet basic education technology literacy and fluency goals;
- identifying and sharing assessments and other measures of students' knowledge and skill in the areas of educational technology literacy and technology fluency; and
- producing, in consultation with the Washington State School Directors' Association, guidance for school districts on the best models and practices for SLIT programs.

By December 15, 2020, and by December 15, 2021, the OSPI must submit to the Legislature preliminary and final reports that include information about, and recommendations to improve, SLIT programs. The final report must include nine specified elements, including data and recommendations related to the quality of and access to SLIT programs.

By December 15, 2022, the OSPI must report to the Legislature with the results of a study on the benefits of SLIT programs and teacher-librarians on student educational outcomes.

The requirement on school boards of directors to provide resources and materials for the operation of SLIT programs is revised from "as the board deems necessary for the proper education of the district's students or as otherwise required by law or rule" to "so that every student in the school district has access to these programs." By September 1, 2022, school districts must adopt or amend: (1) a policy that acknowledges the requirement for boards of directors to provide every student with access to SLIT programs; and (2) procedures that describe how students can access SLIT resources and materials.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds that the SPI, in overseeing SLIT programs, must provide technical assistance on establishing SLIT programs within existing resources to schools that do not have SLIT programs, beginning with Title I schools. The substitute bill also removes provisions allocating additional funding to school districts with a teacher-librarian to student ratio greater than that specified for each prototypical school level to the extent of, and proportionate to, the school district's demonstrated ratio of teacher-librarians to students for that prototypical school level, up to a maximum allocation of 1.0 teacher-librarians.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 6, 2020.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) A well-funded, staffed library delivers inspiration, literacy support, and technology skills that are essential to student success. Teachers need to learn how students can best deal with information, such as: curating, authenticating, and dealing with bias in the media. Librarians can help students learn how to research, foot note, and other skills needed to write term papers. The librarian can give students the confidence and understanding that they need to learn and be successful. Librarians help teachers navigate online resources, connect with authors, and lead trainings. Librarians can partner with other teachers to bring engaging projects to students. Librarians can write grants to bring in federal or private money to provide additional resources and opportunities to students.

The Legislature has expressed its support for school libraries numerous times, yet school districts keep cutting their library programs. There are great discrepancies in SLIT programs and resources across districts. In wealthier areas, a community can supplement the resources needed to pay teacher-librarian contracts. There are other areas where one teacher-librarian must serve multiple schools.

These SLIT programs cannot happen if there are no certificated teacher-librarians in the libraries. Some school districts only have librarian assistants staffing their SLIT programs. Having a full-time teacher-librarian in every school building is critical to the success of a SLIT program. The bill allows districts who want to have a full-time librarian in each school to receive state funding for this.

Providing a SLIT program is crucial for all students; this should not be a local option. This bill will give school districts assistance through the OSPI to implement SLIT programs.

The bill provides clarity of language to help districts implement legislative intent. The bill strengthens and clarifies school reporting requirements. This bill requires the OSPI to review research that the Legislature has already directed to occur and to study how teacher-librarians influence student learning.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Pettigrew, prime sponsor; Carolyn Logue, Washington Library Association; Hillary Marshal, Washougal High School; Christie Kaaland, Antioch University; Craig Seasholes, Deerborn Park International School; and Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.