

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2811

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 24, 2020

Title: An act relating to establishing a statewide environmental sustainability education program.

Brief Description: Establishing a statewide environmental sustainability education program.

Sponsors: Representatives J. Johnson, Steele, Santos, Ramel, Thai, Mead, Frame, Davis, Valdez, Bergquist, Doglio, Kirby, Lovick, Tarleton, Dolan, Goodman, Gregerson, Slatter, Macri, Hudgins, Pollet, Ryu and Stonier.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/20, 91-6.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/21/20, 2/24/20 [DPA, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to contract with a local nonprofit to integrate state learning standards with outdoor field studies and project- and work-based learning opportunities, under certain parameters.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hunt, McCoy, Mullet, Pedersen and Salomon.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Padden and Wagoner.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: State Learning Standards. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to develop state learning standards identifying the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be able to do. Learning standards are based on the student learning goals of basic education, as laid out in statute.

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.

State law also requires OSPI to periodically revise the state learning standards, as needed.

Summary of Amended Bill: OSPI is required to provide state leadership for the integration of environmental and sustainability education (ESE) content with curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Subject to appropriation, OSPI must contract with a Washington-based nonprofit community-based organization to integrate state learning standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science with outdoor field studies and project- and work-based learning opportunities.

The selected nonprofit organization must work collaboratively with OSPI and educational service districts to:

- build systemic programming connecting administrators, school boards, and communities to support teacher practice and student opportunities for the strengthened delivery of ESE;
- support K-12 educators to teach students real-world environmental science and engineering outdoors;
- provide opportunities to engage students in renewable natural resource career awareness; and
- deliver learning materials, opportunities, and resources.

The learning materials, opportunities, and resources the nonprofit delivers must include opportunities outside of the classroom, the encouragement of the application of critical and creative thinking skills, local opportunities to engage students in stewardship projects, work-based learning opportunities in various careers, and models for integrating the Since Time Immemorial curriculum on tribal history, culture, and government.

Priority focus must be given to schools identified for improvement through the Washington school improvement framework and communities historically underserved by science education.

EFFECT OF EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):

- Requires that OSPI contract with a qualified nonprofit on a competitive basis.
- Removes reference to the FieldSTEM model.
- Modifies the definition of a qualified nonprofit to require multiple years of experience in providing certain services, as opposed to at least 15 years experience.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

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 on Engrossed House Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The bill would provide professional development, curriculum, and guidance to schools on important issues of environmental stewardship and careers in environmental areas. Industries have a key interest in promoting environmental education. The bill would allow for continued work in natural resource education that is important to many industries in the state. The work performed under this program is locally focused and is a collaboration between many partners and agencies.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Jesse Johnson, Prime Sponsor; Kathryn Kurtz, Executive Director, Pacific Education Institute; Peter Dykstra, Taylor Shellfish.

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