

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 6191

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Assessing the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences in middle and high school students to inform decision making and improve services.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Braun, Darneille, Hasegawa, O'Ban, Rolfes, Short and Wilson, C.).

**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**

**House Committee on Education**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** Adverse Childhood Experiences. In 2011, the Legislature defined adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) to mean the following indicators of severe childhood stressors and family dysfunction, when experienced in the first 18 years of life and taken together, are provided by public health research to be powerful determinants of physical, mental, social, and behavioral health across the lifespan:

- child physical, sexual, and emotional abuse;
- child emotional or physical neglect;
- alcohol or other substance abuse in the home;
- mental illness, depression, or suicidal behaviors in the home;
- incarceration of a family member;
- witnessing intimate partner violence; and
- parental divorce or separation.

The definition states that ACEs have been demonstrated to affect the development of the brain and other major body systems. The definition applies to a nongovernmental private-public initiative.

Healthy Youth Survey. The Healthy Youth Survey is a collaborative effort of the Health Care Authority (HCA), the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and other state agencies. According to the survey's website, it is an effort to measure health risk behaviors contributing to morbidity, mortality, and social problems among youth in Washington State.

The voluntary survey is administered every two years to students in sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth grades, and responses are anonymous. According to OSPI, over 230,000 students in

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over 1000 schools, from 236 school districts, in all 39 counties took part in the survey in 2018.

**Summary:** HCA, in collaboration with OSPI, Department of Health, and the Liquor and Cannabis Board, must incorporate questions related to ACEs into the Healthy Youth Survey. The questions must be validated for children and would allow reporting of ACEs during childhood to be included in frequency reports. The questions must be administered for two cycles and then evaluated by the state agencies for any needed changes. Student responses to the survey are voluntary and must remain anonymous.

The aggregated student responses must be published by state, educational service district, and county. The aggregated student responses must be available to school districts and school buildings. The student response data must comply with state and federal privacy laws.

School districts are encouraged to use this information in their decision making and to help improve services for students.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	43	3	
House	96	1	(House amended)
Senate	45	3	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** June 11, 2020