

2SHB 2078 - S COMM AMD  
By Committee on Ways & Means

ADOPTED AND ENGROSSED 3/4/2022

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that time  
4 outdoors helps children thrive physically, emotionally, and  
5 academically, yet over the past few generations, childhood has moved  
6 indoors. On average, today's kids spend up to 44 hours per week in  
7 front of a screen, and less than 10 minutes a day doing activities  
8 outdoors. For too many kids, access to the outdoors is determined by  
9 race, income, ability, and zip code. All children deserve equitable  
10 access to outdoor spaces where they can learn, play, and grow, but  
11 current access to outdoor educational opportunities is inequitable.

12 (2) From stress reduction to improved focus and engagement, and  
13 better academic performance, outdoor-based learning helps kids  
14 thrive. Research shows participants in outdoor educational activities  
15 have higher graduation rates, improved behavior in school and  
16 relationships with peers, higher academic achievement, critical  
17 thinking skills, direct experience of scientific concepts in the  
18 field, leadership and collaboration skills, and a deeper engagement  
19 with learning, place, and community. Outdoor educational programs  
20 also offer new opportunities for work-integrated learning in science,  
21 natural resources, education, land management, agriculture, outdoor  
22 recreation, and other employment sectors. Outdoor-based learning  
23 activities can also be a key element in the larger system of regular  
24 outdoor instructional time and outdoor experiences that includes STEM  
25 fields, after-school programs, summer camps, 4-H, scouting, and  
26 related programs which can spark a lifelong appreciation for the  
27 natural world.

28 (3) The legislature further finds that accessibility is a major  
29 obstacle to universal outdoor education. Most sites lack  
30 accommodation for children with disabilities and support staff for  
31 children who need social and emotional support. In addition, some

1 youth may experience cultural barriers to outdoor learning  
2 experiences.

3 (4) Therefore, the legislature intends to establish a statewide  
4 grant program and corresponding outdoor education experiences program  
5 to address these needs and to ensure that all students have a chance  
6 to benefit from outdoor education.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300  
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
10 specific purpose, or within funding made available, the outdoor  
11 learning grant program is established. The purpose of the grant  
12 program is to develop and support educational experiences for  
13 students in Washington public schools.

14 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall  
15 administer the grant program in accordance with this section.

16 (3) Within existing resources, the Washington state parks and  
17 recreation commission, the department of natural resources, the  
18 Washington department of fish and wildlife, the Washington department  
19 of agriculture, and the Washington conservation commission may  
20 partner with the office of the superintendent of public instruction  
21 to provide relevant expertise on land management and work-integrated  
22 learning experiences and opportunities.

23 (4) Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, the office of the  
24 superintendent of public instruction shall award grants to eligible  
25 school districts, federally recognized tribes, and outdoor education  
26 program providers. The office may consult with the Washington  
27 recreation and conservation office in awarding grants under this  
28 section.

29 (5)(a) The grant program must consist of two types of grants,  
30 including:

31 (i) Allocation-based grants for school districts to develop or  
32 support educational experiences; and

33 (ii) Competitive grants for federally recognized tribes and  
34 outdoor education providers to support existing capacity and to  
35 increase future capacity for outdoor learning experiences.

36 (b) In implementing student educational experiences under this  
37 section, school districts and outdoor education providers should  
38 ensure equitable access for students in all geographic regions, and  
39 high levels of accessibility for students with disabilities.

1 (6) Beginning in 2024, the office of the superintendent of public  
2 instruction, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, must submit an annual  
3 report to the appropriate committees of the legislature with an  
4 evaluation of the program established by this section. The report may  
5 include information on other outdoor education and instructional time  
6 efforts and how they compare with programs funded through the outdoor  
7 learning grant program.

8 (7) For the purposes of this section, "school districts" includes  
9 state-tribal education compact schools established under chapter  
10 28A.715 RCW.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
14 specific purpose, the outdoor education experiences program is  
15 established as a program within the outdoor learning grant program  
16 established in section 2 of this act. The purpose of the outdoor  
17 education experiences program is to develop and support outdoor  
18 learning opportunities for 5th and 6th grade students in Washington  
19 public schools, with related opportunities for high school students  
20 to volunteer as counselors. The program will consist of hands-on  
21 learning experiences that: Are three to five days in duration and up  
22 to four nights; are overnight or day programs when overnight programs  
23 are impractical due to health, cultural, or capacity considerations;  
24 and have a focus on environmental education aligned with the  
25 Washington state learning standards and the development of social and  
26 emotional learning skills.

27 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may  
28 work with a statewide nonprofit organization representing school  
29 principals to create guidelines for the program established by this  
30 section.

31 (3) In implementing the program established by this section, the  
32 priority focus of the office of the superintendent of public  
33 instruction must be given to schools that have been identified for  
34 improvement through the Washington school improvement framework and  
35 communities historically underserved by science education. These  
36 communities can include, but are not limited to, federally recognized  
37 tribes, including state-tribal education compact schools, migrant  
38 students, schools with high free and reduced-price lunch populations,  
39 rural and remote schools, students in alternative learning

1 environments, students of color, English language learner students,  
2 and students receiving special education services.

3 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.300.790 and 2018 c 266 s 410 are each amended to  
4 read as follows:

5 (1) The superintendent of public instruction, subject to  
6 conformity with application or other requirements adopted by rule,  
7 shall approve requests by public schools as provided in RCW  
8 28A.320.173 to consider student participation in seasonal or  
9 nonseasonal outdoor-based activities, including programs established  
10 in accordance with section 2 of this act, and the outdoor education  
11 experiences program established in section 3 of this act, as  
12 instructional days for the purposes of basic education requirements  
13 established in RCW 28A.150.220(5).

14 (2) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules to  
15 implement this section."

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16 On page 1, line 2 of the title, after "program;" strike the  
17 remainder of the title and insert "amending RCW 28A.300.790; adding  
18 new sections to chapter 28A.300 RCW; and creating a new section."

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