

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1617

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 21, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to aligning state and school holidays.

**Brief Description:** Aligning state and school holidays.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Morgan, Leavitt, Johnson, J., Ramel, Callan, Davis, Taylor, Santos, Simmons, Riccelli, Ormsby and Harris-Talley).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/2/22, 88-8.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/16/22, 2/21/22 [DP, w/oRec].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Specifies that all state legal holidays are also school holidays on which school may not be taught.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair, K-12; Wilson, C., Vice Chair, Early Learning; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Hunt, Mullet and Pedersen.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Dozier and McCune.

**Staff:** Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

**Background:** State Legal Holidays. Washington recognizes 11 specific days as state legal holidays: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Presidents' Day; Memorial Day; Juneteenth; Independence Day; Labor Day; Veterans' Day; Thanksgiving Day; Native

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American Heritage Day; and Christmas Day.

School Holidays. Washington recognizes ten specific days as school holidays on which school may not be taught: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Presidents' Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Veterans' Day; Thanksgiving Day; Native American Heritage Day; and Christmas Day.

Juneteenth, which was declared a state legal holiday in 2021, is the only state legal holiday that is not included in the enumerated list of school holidays.

**Summary of Bill:** All state legal holidays are also school holidays on which school may not be taught. The list of specific school holidays is removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2022.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This is a simple bill that provides a technical fix. Last year the Legislature chose to recognize Juneteenth as a state holiday, but inadvertently left Juneteenth off the list of school recognized holidays. This bill clarifies that all state holidays are school holidays, which will provide parity across all districts. Students and parents have expressed a wish for a historically accurate curriculum for this holiday, so that all districts can teach the history of Juneteenth.

CON: Adding another holiday interrupts student learning, which has already suffered constant disruption and instability over the past two years. This is another state mandate that imposes an agenda on local districts, and it would affect parents having to take unpaid time off or find childcare.

OTHER: While the intent of the bill is to address ambiguity, there are still questions regarding how this will impact classified staff. The Legislature needs to fully fund cost impacts and include language in the intent section noting classified staff are granted this holiday.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Melanie Morgan, Prime Sponsor; Virginia Barry, Stand for Children.

CON: Julie Barrett, Conservative Ladies of Washington.

OTHER: Barbara Posthumus, School Alliance; Jennifer McMaster, Public School Employees of Washington.

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