

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2381

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Increasing eligibility for economy and efficiency flexible school calendar waivers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives McEntire, Shavers and Chapman; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

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

Background:

The Legislature establishes the minimum instructional program of basic education that must be offered by school districts. Among other requirements, the state's program of basic education obligates school districts to:

- provide instruction to students in accordance with the state learning standards, the grade-level learning standards developed by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and
- make their educational program accessible to all students who are at least 5 years of age and less than 21 years of age for a minimum of 180 days per school year.

School districts must also provide a specified minimum number of instructional hours per year, which are defined as those hours during which students are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity planned by, and under the direction of, school district staff.

School districts may seek waivers for certain education laws and administrative rules under prescribed circumstances. For example, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in accordance with criteria established by the State Board of Education, may grant three-year renewable waivers from the 180-day school year requirement to school districts that propose to operate one or more schools on a flexible calendar for purposes of economy and efficiency.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A school district seeking a waiver from the 180-day school year requirement must submit an application to the SPI that meets certain content requirements, including having:

- a proposed calendar for the school day and school year that demonstrates how instructional hour requirements will be maintained;
- an explanation and estimate of the economies and efficiencies to be gained from compressing the instructional hours into fewer than 180 days;
- an explanation of the impact on employees in education support positions and the ability to recruit and retain employees in education support positions; and
- a summary of comments received at one or more public hearings on the proposal and how concerns will be addressed.

The SPI is limited to issuing the 180-day school year waivers to 10 school districts, and eligible districts must have fewer than 500 students. Of the waivers that may be issued, two must be reserved for school districts with fewer than 150 students.

Summary:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to issue waivers reducing the minimum number of school days required in a school year to 30 or fewer school districts with fewer than 1,000 students.

The waiver applications, among other requirements, must include an examination of the impact on employees in education support positions, including expected position and work hour reductions, reductions in force, and the loss of work benefits or eligibility for work benefits.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	95	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 6, 2024