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## Education Committee

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### SSB 5054

**Brief Description:** Promoting and facilitating the use of professional learning communities.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Dhingra, Nobles, Saldaña, Valdez and Wilson, C.).

#### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Encourages school districts to establish a school calendar that provides up to four hours each week for certificated instructional staff to engage in professional learning communities (PLCs) during the school day.
- Modifies the definition of instructional hours to include hours students are engaging in educational activities under the supervision of noncertificated staff while certificated staff participate in PLCs.
- Specifies that school districts providing time for PLCs must meet specified requirements.

**Hearing Date:** 3/14/23

**Staff:** Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

#### **Background:**

##### Professional Learning.

"Professional learning" is defined as a comprehensive, sustained, job-embedded, and collaborative approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement.

Professional learning, among other things:

- fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance and must comprise

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learning that is aligned with student learning needs, educator development needs, and school district or state improvement goals;

- must have as its primary focus the improvement of teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness in assisting all students to meet the state learning standards;
- is an ongoing process that is measurable by multiple indicators and includes learning experiences that support the acquisition and transfer of learning, knowledge, and skills into the classroom and daily practice; and
- must incorporate differentiated, coherent, sustained, and evidence-based strategies that improve educator effectiveness and student achievement, including job-embedded coaching or other forms of assistance to support educators' transfer of new knowledge and skills into their practice.

Standards for professional learning provide guidance on the preparation and delivery of high quality professional learning to those responsible for planning, facilitating, and sponsoring professional learning. The professional learning standards include two content standards, five process standards, and three context standards.

The state allocates funding for three professional learning days for each certificated instructional staff each year; although, nothing entitles an individual certificated instructional staff to any particular number of professional learning days. The term "certificated instructional staff" includes teachers, counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and other educational staff associates. School districts are required to use one professional learning day each year to train school districts staff on specified topics.

#### Instructional Hours.

School districts must provide at least a district-wide average of 1,080 instructional hours for students in grades 9 through 12 and at least a district-wide average of 1,000 instructional hours for students in grades 1 through 8, all of which may be calculated using a district-wide average over grades 1 through 12. School districts also must provide at least 1,000 instructional hours for kindergarten students.

"Instructional hours" is defined as those hours students are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity planned by and under the direction of school district staff, as directed by the administration and board of directors of the district, inclusive of intermissions for class changes, recess, and teacher/parent-guardian conferences that are planned and scheduled by the district for the purpose of discussing students' educational needs or progress. Instructional hours do not include time actually spent for meals unless students are provided the opportunity to engage in an educational activity that is part of the regular instructional program concurrently with the consumption of breakfast.

A school district may employ classified staff to supervise school children in noninstructional activities, and in instructional activities while under the supervision of certificated staff. Rules of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction define "asynchronous instruction" to mean instruction prepared by a certificated teacher that occurs away from the physical school setting

without two-way interactive communication.

**Summary of Bill:**

School districts are encouraged to promote and facilitate effective and collaborative professional learning by establishing a school calendar that provides up to four hours each week for certificated instructional staff to engage in professional learning communities during the school day.

"Professional learning community" is defined as a group of educators within a school or school district that meets regularly to share expertise, reflect on their practice, and work collaboratively to enhance their knowledge and skills to teach and support students' academic, social, and emotional learning and growth. It is specified that a professional learning community can be made up of educators across different subject and support areas, grade levels and levels of leadership.

The term "instructional hours" is modified to include hours students are engaging in educational activities under the supervision of noncertificated school district staff while certificated staff participate in professional learning communities.

If a school district provides time for professional learning communities to promote ongoing professional learning during the school day, the framework and characteristics of a professional learning community must be based on research of what creates an effective professional learning community and must be consistent with professional learning requirements. If a school district provides time for professional learning communities to promote ongoing professional development during the school day, the specific framework and characteristics that will be used to guide the implementation and continued functioning of the professional learning community must be established through collective bargaining.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.