

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5505

As of February 2, 2023

Title: An act relating to addressing learning loss by expanding the school year.

Brief Description: Addressing learning loss by expanding the school year.

Sponsors: Senators Hawkins, Wellman, Billig, Braun, Conway, Hunt, Kuderer, Nobles, Wilson, C. and Wilson, L..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/02/23.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the mandatory number of school days for public K-12 schools from 180 days to 185 days.
- Modifies the instructional hour requirements in proportion to the change in mandatory school days.
- Adjusts other statutes to conform with 185-day requirement.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Instructional Hours. Instructional hours are defined in state law as those hours students are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity planned by and under the direction of school district staff, inclusive of intermissions for class changes, recess, and teacher and parent-guardian conferences, and exclusive of time actually spent for meals.

School districts in Washington must meet annual minimum requirements for providing instructional hours. Districts must offer students a district-wide average of at least 1080

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hours for students in grades 9 through 12 and a minimum of 1000 instructional hours for students in kindergarten through grade 8.

School Day Requirements. School districts must also offer a minimum of 180 days of instruction each year to students in all grades.

For students who are graduating from high school, a school district may schedule the last five school days of the 180-day year for noninstructional purposes, including, but not limited to, observance of graduation and early release from school upon the request of a student. Any hours scheduled by a school district for noninstructional purposes for such students count toward the instructional hours requirement under state law.

In accordance with criteria adopted by the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction may grant waivers to school districts for certain provisions, including those relating to instructional hours and school days, on the basis that such waiver or waivers are necessary to implement successfully a local plan to provide for all students in the district an effective education system designed to enhance the educational program for each student.

Summary of Bill: Each school district's kindergarten through 12th grade basic educational program shall consist of a minimum of 185 school days per school year in such grades as are conducted by a school district.

As part of their minimum instructional offering, each school district must provide at least 1110 instructional hours for students in grades 9 through 12 and at least 1028 hours for students in grades 1 through 8.

Other statutes are modified to align with the change in school day requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 2023.

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

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2023.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We have long operated under the same school calendar model, which doesn't effectively use the time to teach our students. Learning loss justifies the necessity to do something to get these students back on track. The state funding five additional days would be an incremental step. We need to act now while we have a massive budget surplus. This bill takes swift and decisive action and provides a direct solution to support learning recovery with a simple solution providing our students with additional access to their teachers, peers, and dedicated support staff.

Research shows that additional time for students is beneficial. School closures and remote learning have negatively impacted schools and students.

CON: The addition of five extra days is too broad and does not address the needs of each individual student to regain the learning that was lost. These funds could be better spent allowing parents access to private tutors for their children and help them catch up with learning that was denied during the shutdown.

OTHER: We want to make sure all the technical aspects are there before moving this bill forward. The implementation of this legislation would require movement of the structure that sets the minimum and maximum salaries with the change in the days and compensation. The STARS transportation formula would also require adjustment as this transition is made.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Brad Hawkins, Prime Sponsor; Tyler Muench, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Dan Steele, WA Assn of School Administrators.

CON: Jeannie Magdua, Conservative Ladies of Washington.

OTHER: Julie Salvi, Washington Education Association; Mike Hoover, Washington State School Directors' Association.

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