

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5769

As of February 26, 2025

Title: An act relating to transition to kindergarten programs.

Brief Description: Addressing transition to kindergarten programs.

Sponsors: Senators Wellman, Wilson, C. and Nobles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/26/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Limits Transition to Kindergarten Program funding beginning in the 2025-26 school year to the funded enrollment of eligible children during the 2024-25 school year.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Kayla Hammer (786-7305)

Background: Transition to Kindergarten Program. In 2023, the Transition to Kindergarten (TTK) Program was established to assist eligible children in need of additional preparation to be successful kindergarten students in the following school year. Prior to 2023 and the creation of the TTK Program, some school districts and charter schools elected to offer a kindergarten program for children not yet age five who did not have access to high-quality early learning experiences prior to kindergarten and had been deemed, through a screening process or other instrument, to need additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten the following year.

Rules. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) was directed to adopt rules for the administration of, the allocation of state funding for, and minimum standards and requirements for, the TTK Program. The rules must include specified minimum

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requirements for school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools operating a TTK Program.

Operation. School districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools operating a TTK Program must adopt policies regarding eligibility, recruitment, and enrollment for the TTK Program that, at a minimum, meet the requirements of the OSPI rules. When adopting TTK policies, school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools must consider best practices developed by OSPI, in collaboration with the Department of Children, Youth and Families, related to statewide coordinated eligibility, recruitment, enrollment, and selection.

Charter schools authorized by the Washington State Charter School Commission are not permitted to operate a TTK Program until the beginning of the 2025-26 school year.

Enrollment. The Caseload Forecast Council (CFC) provides the enrollment forecast for common schools and charter schools which includes children enrolled in grades K-12, TTK Programs, as well as other public school education programs. Enrollment is forecasted as a ten month—September to June—annual average full-time equivalent (AAFTE), where one AAFTE is the equivalent of one student enrolled full time.

Funding. Funding for the TTK Program must be calculated using the actual number of AAFTE eligible children enrolled in the TTK Program and based on the following portions of the prototypical school funding model: class size; staff types; district-wide support services; materials, supplies, and operating costs; the Learning Assistance Program; and the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program. Funding for the TTK Program must be based on the transportation distribution formula for public elementary and secondary schools, calculated using reported ridership for eligible children enrolled in the TTK Program.

Funding provided for the TTK Program is not part of the state's statutory Program of Basic Education and must be expended only for the support of operating a TTK Program.

Summary of Bill: Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, the funding for the TTK Program is limited to the funded AAFTE enrollment of eligible children during the 2024-25 school year.

The requirement for CFC to forecast eligible children participating in the TTK Program is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: CON: Most recent data shows TTK students outperform their peers and are they are more proficient in the learning standards. This limits a proven option for children. The pause on the TKK Program should not be indeterminate. Please build in some some growth for smaller districts. Our district currently works with ECEAP providers to ensure proper placement. The children really thrive in the program. Children are performing better when they utilize TTK. Capping would be detrimental.

OTHER: There is understanding of the budget crisis and maintaining the current level of funding is a good thing. The TKK Program serves the students most in need. Respectfully requesting language that restarts the TKK Program in the future. Really appreciate the work so far addressing child care deserts. Recommend some language that allows some growth that is targeted. Access to early childhood education is limited and the TTK Program is a vital part of the community. As communities are expected to grow we hope the TKK Program can grow with it.

Persons Testifying:

CON: Nasue Nishida, Washington Education Association.

OTHER: Jenny Plaja, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); Barbara Gilchrist, Washington State Charter Schools Association; Jim Kowalkowski, Rural Education Center; Jerry Pugh, Colfax School District; Jeff Baerwald, Nine Mile Falls School District; Nikolas Bergman, Quincy School District.

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