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HOUSE BILL 1466

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State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representative Rule

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting access to outdoor education; adding  
2 a new section to chapter 28A.630 RCW; creating a new section; and  
3 providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that outdoor  
6 education has many benefits for students, for example promoting  
7 creativity and problem solving, developing social skills, improving  
8 classroom engagement, and increasing physical activity. During the  
9 COVID-19 pandemic, many students have transitioned to distance  
10 learning; however, outdoor play and classmate interaction remain  
11 important for students and can be achieved using outdoor education.  
12 Outdoor environments have low rates of transmission of the virus that  
13 causes COVID-19, so students and teachers can safely come together  
14 for in-person classes.

15 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to establish a pilot  
16 project to provide assistance to schools to provide access to outdoor  
17 education, bring students and teachers together for in-person  
18 classes, and to further investigate the benefits of outdoor, nature-  
19 based classrooms for Washington's children and families.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 28A.630

2    RCW to read as follows:

3        (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall  
4    establish a pilot project for outdoor, nature-based education  
5    programs in public schools. The pilot project must begin in the  
6    2021-22 school year and conclude at the end of the 2024-25 school  
7    year.

8        (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must  
9    develop an application for the pilot project. Applications must  
10   include an implementation plan.

11       (3) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
12   specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public  
13   instruction must award grants to up to 15 schools selected for  
14   participation in the pilot project. When selecting pilot project  
15   locations, the office of the superintendent of public instruction  
16   shall aim to select a mix of rural, urban, and suburban locations  
17   across the state and must give priority to schools with a high  
18   percentage of students eligible for the free and reduced-price meals  
19   program.

20       (4) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
21   specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public  
22   instruction may convene an advisory group of outdoor, nature-based  
23   education practitioners to inform and support implementation of the  
24   pilot project.

25       (5) By November 30, 2024, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036,  
26   the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall provide  
27   a report on findings from the pilot project, including  
28   recommendations for modifying or expanding the availability of  
29   outdoor, nature-based education programs, to the governor and the  
30   appropriate committees of the legislature.

31       (6) This section expires July 1, 2025.

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