

Submitter: Joy Gulseth

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1596

Dear Senate Committee Members,

My name is Joy Gulseth and I have been working in public education for the last 4 years. While I am relatively new to working in public education I have been working with individuals as young as 18 months up until the age of 21 for over 10 years. I know the value play-based learning can have on an individual at any age, but especially our K-8 students.

There may be an assumption that incorporating play-based learning will lower academic standards as it focuses more on fun, be a waste of instructional time, lead to poor classroom management, and does not prepare students for tests used to measure learning standards. However, these lines of thinking are misguided. The reality is play-based learning facilitates cognitive development, academic skills, executive functioning, emotional resilience, and social competence.

Currently, many students are not engaging with the current curriculum that focuses primarily on pencil to paper learning. Additionally, the current curriculum leaves little room to modify and accommodate for the various learning styles that are represented in our students. It is time to change what we are doing, because what we are currently doing is not working. More and more students are leaving their classrooms to escape the demands or avoid coming to school altogether.

It is time to make school a place where students want to be and that starts with fun which begins with play. Play-based learning allows complex concepts to be more effectively taught as children are guided through instructions and allowed to explore, experiment, and reflect. Play-based learning draws students into the classroom by improving motivation, engagement, attention, and retention. Play-based learning is structured with clear expectations facilitated by teachers, allowing students to build intrinsic motivation and cooperation and collaboration with others. Play-based learning facilitates creativity, ingenuity, innovation to unique problems. Finally, play-based learning teaches comprehension, reasoning, and problem-solving skills which improve long-term learning and not rote memorization to pass a standardized test.

Play-based learning brings the fun of learning back into our schools, not just for our students but for our educators. Please support senate bill 1596.

Sincerely,

Joy Gulseth