

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1879

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing for the delivery of educational services to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Jacks, Kagi, Moeller, Orcutt, Wallace, Appleton and Kenney).

House Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services
House Committee on Education Appropriations
Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education

Background:

The Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) traces its history back to 1886 when the first facility was established in Vancouver, Clark County, by then territorial Governor, Watson Squire. In 1888 the original property was exchanged for the site where the WSD sits today. In 1906 the WSD became officially known as the State School for the Deaf and Blind. Seven years later, in 1913, the schools were separated to create the Washington School for the Deaf and the Washington State School for the Blind. Much of the statutory framework for operation of the WSD has remained relatively unchanged since 1985.

In 2002 the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) examined various models of deaf education and service delivery. In 2006 the Institute studied issues relating to the governance and operation of the WSD. Following that study, the Legislature appropriated \$55,000 to the Institute for the purpose of contracting with a facilitator to conduct a series of meetings with stakeholders to discuss strengths and weaknesses of educational services available statewide to children who are deaf or hearing impaired.

In June 2007 the Institute published its report recommending that a single state agency be charged with overseeing the quality and outcomes of local, regional, and statewide schools and programs serving students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind. These recommendations represented a consensus of stakeholders.

Summary:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss (Center) is established. The WSD in Vancouver will remain as part of the Center. The currently appointed Superintendent of the WSD will become the Director of the Center and the WSD Board of Trustees will become the Governing Board for the Center. The governance structure of the Center will be the same as it is for the WSD.

The Center's primary functions will be to:

- provide statewide leadership and support for coordination of regionally-delivered deaf education services in the full range of communication modalities;
- manage and supervise the WSD; and
- collaborate with public and private partners in developing an applied research center for training and professional development for educators serving children who are deaf or hearing impaired.

The powers and duties of the Director of the Center include all powers and duties currently defined for the Superintendent of the WSD, plus the following additional duties:

- providing technical assistance and administrative support to educational service districts for the regional delivery of services to students who are deaf or hearing impaired; and
- providing technical assistance and support as appropriate to local and regional efforts to build critical mass and communication-rich networking opportunities for children who are deaf or hearing impaired and their families.

The Director and board of trustees of the Center will consult with stakeholders for the purpose of planning the implementation of demonstration programs in two educational service districts (ESDs) for the delivery of education services in the full range of communication modalities to children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Stakeholders will include the OSPI's Washington Sensory Disabilities Services, the DSHS's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, parents of children who are deaf and hard of hearing, adults and students who are deaf or hard of hearing, an ESD superintendent, a school district superintendent, the Department of Health, the Department of Early Learning, and two non-governmental entities.

The Director and board of trustees will select and consult with two ESDs, one of which must be in Eastern Washington. By December 31, 2010, the board and director will report to the Legislature and the Governor with recommendations for the implementation and operation of the demonstration sites.

The term "School for the Deaf" is replaced with "Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss" in numerous statutes.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	0	
Senate	46	0	(Senate amended)
House	92	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 26, 2009