

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2546

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Education*

**Title:** An act relating to education.

**Brief Description:** Developing a performance-based school system.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Peery, Brough, D. Sommers, Brumsickle, Vance, Wineberry, Dorn, Franklin, Orr, Wang, Scott, Broback, J. Kohl, Wood, Rayburn, Roland, Bray, Ogden, Cooper, Pruitt, Sheldon, Sprenkle, Spanel, Hine, Rasmussen and H. Myers.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Education, January 29, 1992, DPS.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION**

**Majority Report:** *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 18 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff; Broback; Brumsickle; Carlson; G. Cole; Dorn; P. Johnson; Jones; J. Kohl; Neher; Orr; Rasmussen; Roland; and Valle.

**Staff:** Robert Butts (786-7111).

**Background:** Many think that current state-imposed requirements place too much emphasis on complying with requirements and not enough emphasis on what, and whether, students are learning. In their view, the state should dramatically reduce its current requirements, but hold school districts accountable for the educational achievement of their students. In addition, high school completion should not be based on how many hours a student sits in specified classes, but on what students know and are able to do.

In mid-1991, the governor appointed a Council on Education Reform and Funding. The council will provide recommendations to the governor and Legislature in December 1992. In preparing the recommendations, the council is

developing student learning goals. These goals are intended to be the foundation for developing a comprehensive framework that will determine what students need to know and be able to do as they progress through the school system.

***Summary of Substitute Bill:***

PART I: COMMISSION ON STUDENT LEARNING

A 10 member Commission on Student Learning is established. The governor appoints nine of the members and appoints one of the members to chair the commission. The Superintendent of Public Instruction also is a member of the commission. Educators, business leaders, and parents are to be represented on the commission.

The commission must report annually to the Legislature, and terminates September 1, 1998.

Major responsibilities of the commission include:

- o Determine essential learnings for elementary and secondary students. At a minimum, these learnings shall include reading, writing, speaking, science, history, geography, mathematics, and critical thinking. In developing these essential learnings, the commission shall incorporate the student learning goals identified by the governor's Council on Education Reform and Funding.
- o Present to the state Board of Education (SBE) and the state Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) state-wide elementary and secondary assessment systems to determine if students are mastering the essential learnings. The elementary assessment system is to be implemented beginning the 1996-97 school year, and the secondary assessment is to be implemented in the 1997-98 school year, unless the Legislature acts to delay or prevent implementation of the essential learnings and assessments.
- o Make recommendations for a state-wide accountability system to evaluate the level of learning occurring in schools. The commission shall also recommend steps that should be taken to assist schools in which learning is significantly below expected levels of performance.
- o Develop strategies to assist schools in ensuring the essential learnings are mastered by students.
- o Establish a Quality Schools Center to plan, implement, and evaluate a professional development process.

- o Develop recommendations on the resources needed to help students achieve the essential learnings, and estimating the expected cost of implementing the assessment systems.

## PART II: INTERIM WAIVERS OF BASIC EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Any school or school district may receive a waiver from the statutory requirements pertaining to school building self-study, teacher classroom contact hours, and the basic education program hour requirements.

To receive the waiver the school district must submit to the state Board of Education a plan for restructuring its educational program or the educational program of individual schools in the district. The plan must include specific standards for increased student learning the district expects to achieve, how the district plans to achieve the higher standards, and how the district will determine if the standards are being met. The plan does not have to be approved by the state board.

Waivers may be renewed every three years upon the SBE receiving a renewal request from the school district board of directors.

If a district intends to waive the program hour offering requirement, it must provide at least a district-wide annual average of 1,000 instructional hours for grades one through 12, and 450 instructional hours in kindergarten.

The Student Learning Objectives Law is repealed.

## PART III: BASIC EDUCATION AMENDMENTS -- EFFECTIVE 1998

Effective September 1, 1998, the goal of the Basic Education Act is to provide students an opportunity to master the essential learnings as identified by the Commission on Student Learning.

The Basic Education Program offering requirement is amended to require a total instructional offering of 450 hours for students enrolled in kindergarten, and a district-wide annual average total instructional offering of 1,000 hours for students enrolled in grades one through 12. The instructional program shall include the essential learnings and such other subjects and activities the school district determines.

Requirements for school building self-study and teacher classroom contact hours are repealed.

All Basic Education Act amendments and the repeal of the self-study requirement shall become effective September 1, 1998, unless a law is enacted stating that a school accountability and assessment system is not in place.

PART IV: SCHOOL BOARD POWERS

School board powers are broadened to include the broad discretionary power to adopt policies not in conflict with other laws that provide for the development and implementation of programs, activities, services, or practices that promote the education of the district's students, or promotes the effective, efficient, or safe management and operation of the district.

PART VI: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For a seventh or eighth grader to receive high school graduation credit for taking a high school class, the content of the class must exceed the requirements of a seventh or eighth grade class.

PART V: LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT

If both houses of the Legislature do not adopt a resolution or legislation ratifying the learning goals of the governor's Council on Education Reform and Funding by July 1993, sections of the act pertaining to the Commission on Student Learning and the modification of basic education requirements shall be null and void.

***Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:*** Additional legislative oversight was provided during the development of the assessment system and essential learnings. Language was added to clarify the academic subjects that must be included in the essential learnings. In addition to its other duties, the Commission on Student Learning was directed to establish a professional development center to provide staff development and technical assistance to school districts. A provision that would have redelegated minimum high school graduation requirements to the state Board of Education was removed.

***Fiscal Note:*** Requested January 16, 1992.

***Effective Date of Substitute Bill:*** The amendments to the Basic Education Act take effect September 1, 1998.

***Testimony For:*** The state needs to move toward a system where we establish what we expect students to know and be able to do, and let educators figure out how to teach it.

This bill is consistent with the direction of the governor's Blue Ribbon Commission.

**Testimony Against:** Elected officials should decide what should be learned in schools, not a group appointed by the governor. We are concerned that the essential learnings will move us away from academics into values, critical thinking, and attitude development. These are subjects that should be taught in the home.

**Witnesses:** Marcia Costello, SPI (strongly supports local flexibility provisions); Pari Johnson (opposed); Dwayne Slate, Washington School Directors' Association (supports); Erika Cranmer (opposed); Lael Dorman (opposed); Linda Byrnes, state Board of Education (commented on specific aspects of the bill); Doyle Winter, Washington School Administrators (supports in concept); Cris Shardelman (opposed); Joe Pope, School Principals Association (supports concept); and Marilyn Hatch (opposed).