

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2695

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Education*

**Title:** An act relating to the fair start program.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the fair start program.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives G. Fisher, Peery, Brough, Vance, Belcher, G. Cole, Roland, Basich, Riley, Sheldon, Ludwig, Paris, Wineberry, Winsley, Nelson, Franklin, Jones, Pruitt, Wynne, Brekke, J. Kohl, Orr, Leonard, O'Brien and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Education, February 3, 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 19 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; H. Sommers; and Valle.

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

**Background:** Research findings from national and state studies and demographic data indicate that an increasing number of children are at risk of not performing up to their potential in school. Contributing reasons include child abuse and neglect, poverty, family transiency, substance abuse, and poor health and nutrition. It is proposed that providing counseling and related prevention and intervention services at the elementary grade level will enhance the educational experience for these students.

In 1991, the Legislature appropriated \$15 million for elementary school intervention and prevention services.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** From funds appropriated by the Legislature, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) shall establish the Fair Start Program to assist school

districts in providing prevention and intervention programs for elementary grade students.

SPI shall distribute funds equitably to all school districts based on the district's enrollment in grades kindergarten through six. Fair Start funds shall not be used to replace funding for existing activities unless the funding for the existing activities is lost.

School districts and education service districts (ESDs) accepting Fair Start funds shall submit to SPI not later than June 1, 1993:

- (a) the district's goals and plans for elementary school prevention and intervention services;
- (b) notification procedures for parents;
- (c) use of grant funds for inservice purposes; and
- (d) other information as requested by SPI.

ESDs and two or more school districts may submit joint applications for Fair Start funds.

To the greatest extent possible, the delivery of services to students shall not be duplicative of other programs, shall be consistent with the applicable children's mental health delivery system, shall emphasize the most efficient and cost-effective use of funds, and shall be provided on a 12-month basis. School districts and ESDs shall enter into written interagency agreements with community-based public or private human service providers to assure appropriate services to students.

The superintendent shall develop specific measures to evaluate the Fair Start Program.

Reporting requirements are specified.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Intent language was added clarifying that school counseling may be funded using Fair Start funds. In addition, a provision was added that requires, to the greatest extent possible, services provided under Fair Start to be consistent with the applicable children's mental health delivery system. Reporting requirements also were modified.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** An increasing number of children are bringing emotional, mental, and health problems to the

classroom. Teachers need additional help in assisting these children. Services should be provided in collaboration with community-based social and human service providers.

**Testimony Against:** While the concept is strongly supported, early intervention and prevention funds should be used primarily in the schools. While we agree that treatment services should be provided outside the school, prevention and intervention services are most effective when they are school-based.

**Witnesses:** Marilyn LaCelle, Valley Mental Health Center (supports); Louise Moffitt, School Administrators & Puyallup School District (supports concept, but concerned that the bill will restrict school personnel from providing services); Bob Weir, Hood Canal School District (supports); Walter Ball, School Principals (supports, with reservations about collaboration requirements); Karyn Clarke, Tacoma School District (supports concept); Mary Ault, DSHS (supports concept, but concerned about loaning DSHS employees to schools); Marcia Holland, PTA (supports concept); Bob Fisher, WEA (supports concept); Pat Thibaudeau, Washington Community Mental Health (supports with clarification); Margaret Casey, Children's Alliance (supports); and Marcia Costello, SPI (supports concept).