

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2551

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 27, 1992

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to special educational services demonstration projects.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives H. Sommers, Peery, Brough and Valle)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Anderson, Craswell, Metcalf, Oke, Pelz, Rinehart, and A. Smith.

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Hearing Dates: February 20, 1992; February 27, 1992

BACKGROUND:

In 1991 the Legislature enacted Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1329. The legislation was designed to encourage school districts, individually and cooperatively, to develop innovative special services demonstration projects to promote the efficient use of resources and increase student learning. Additional purposes of the legislation included promoting noncategorical approaches to special service programs, to develop efficient and cost-effective means for identifying learning disabled students, and to grant waivers from state rules, especially those exceeding federal requirements. The legislation authorized between 10 and 25 school districts to be selected to participate.

Seattle, Edmonds, and Olympia are the three districts that have been selected currently. Between seven and 22 more districts will be selected. The projects are authorized through the 1994-95 school year.

Due to the method for calculating funding, several districts have decided not to apply to participate in the pilot program.

SUMMARY:

Language is added to clarify that the intent of the Special Education Services Demonstration projects is to discourage unnecessary labeling of students while still providing state funding for needed services.

A distinction is made between projects that are intended to reduce labeling and those that are not. For projects that are reducing labeling, handicapped funding during and two years after the project will be based on the district's average K-12 percentage handicapped enrollment during the 1991-92 school year. The funding for other districts participating in the project would be based on their current handicapped enrollments.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

Districts participating in the project currently (Edmonds, Olympia, and Seattle) have the option of continuing to receive funds under a three-year rolling average.

TESTIMONY FOR:

This change in funding will encourage districts to participate in the project. This is a pilot project. It will help participating districts explore the possibility of moving away from difficult and cumbersome assessment procedures while providing the services to students who need them.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; Bill Hulten, Olympia School District