

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5182**

**AS OF FEBRUARY 13, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Authorizing special educational services demonstration projects.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Saling, Rinehart, L. Smith, Gaspard, Bauer, Bailey and Murray; by request of Legislative Budget Committee.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Staff:** Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

**Hearing Dates:** February 13, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

The Legislative Budget Committee (LBC) has studied and issued a report regarding services to special education students with specific learning disabilities (SLD). Specifically, LBC reviewed the costs of identifying students with specific learning disabilities, program eligibility standards, effectiveness of services and student characteristics. The LBC study concluded that:

- (1) The assessment process for identifying students as SLD is expensive and has little diagnostic or programmatic value.
- (2) Programs for SLD and other mildly handicapped students provide little information on student outcomes or program effectiveness.
- (3) Many students identified as specific learning disabled are educationally similar to low-achieving students in other categorical programs.

**SUMMARY:**

Grants are provided to school districts to develop special services demonstration projects to encourage blending of categorical program resources including funds for handicapped, learning assistance, bilingual and federal programs. Local funds may also be used.

A Project Oversight Board is created to select between 10 and 25 demonstration projects. The Project Oversight Board is comprised of representatives from the Legislative Budget Committee, fiscal and policy committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, the Office of Financial Management, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Other duties of the board include: developing criteria, providing in-service

training and technical assistance, identifying laws or rules which need to be waived, evaluating or contracting for the evaluation of the projects, and reporting to the Legislature.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is responsible for issuing waivers approved by the oversight board, making contract payments, and helping the oversight board administer the projects.

Participating school districts are required to meet regularly with teachers, support staff, and parents as the projects are planned and implemented. School districts must administer any required annual tests and work with the oversight board to evaluate the project.

Participating districts may combine handicapped funds for students served in the program, learning assistance program funds, transitional bilingual program funds, funds under the federal elementary and secondary school improvement amendments, and local funds. The amount of the state allocations for the project are determined by the oversight board and are based upon the percentage of students enrolled in the handicapped program during the two years before the program begins. The district must continue to serve the same number of handicapped children as the federal government requires for maintenance of effort. However, any increase in allocations for the handicapped programs can be designated as noncategorical project funds and used to serve any student in the program. Learning assistance program funds are based upon formulas used in districts without the projects. Bilingual program funds are based upon a negotiated percentage. Increases in the allocation for the learning assistance and bilingual programs are designated as noncategorical project funds and may be expended on services to any student served in the project.

The program expires January 1, 1996.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested February 5, 1991

**Effective Date:** June 30, 1991