

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5234

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, MARCH 5, 1991

Brief Description: Establishing the reach for excellence grant program.

SPONSORS: Senators Bailey, Erwin, Rinehart, Oke, Pelz, Anderson, Murray, Metcalf, A. Smith, Johnson, Barr, Skratek, Sutherland, and Conner.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5234 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Larry Davis (786-7422)

Hearing Dates: January 16, 1991; January 25, 1991; January 28, 1991; January 31, 1991

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5234 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Bailey, Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, Hayner, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Metcalf, Murray, Newhouse, Niemi, Owen, Rinehart, Saling, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Bill Freund (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: March 4, 1991; March 5, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Since enactment of the Basic Education Act in 1977, the state has established a number of programs and requirements with the intent of enhancing the quality of education in the state's common schools. As the 21st century approaches, efforts continue to explore ways to further improve the educational experience for Washington students. Research and experience indicate that the most appropriate place to focus educational renewal and restructuring initiatives is at the building and classroom levels, and that educational accountability and compensation for employees are important variables affecting the success of educational improvement endeavors.

SUMMARY:

PART I - REACH FOR EXCELLENCE GRANT PROGRAM

The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes the REACH FOR EXCELLENCE grant program to assist schools and school districts in local efforts to improve student learning and skills through improvements in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Participation in the program is voluntary. REACH projects may last up to six years.

The State Board is responsible for final decisions regarding selection and funding levels of projects, assessing the progress of projects to determine their eligibility for REACH achievement awards, and for determining the manner in which REACH achievement awards will be distributed. The SBE establishes a working committee to assist the Board. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is responsible for administration of the program once projects and funding levels have been determined by the State Board.

Schools or school districts are eligible to apply for participation in the REACH program to implement or enhance an existing educational excellence project. Grant applications must include specified information, including:

- o Identification of target educational outcomes for basic academic skills, workplace skills, and life and family skills;
- o Benchmark data for the target educational outcomes;
- o Benchmark data for context and process indicators;
- o A description of how the funds will be used;
- o Identification of the evaluation and accountability procedures to be used to assess progress toward the target educational outcomes, including the development or use of a measure other than standardized tests to assess student performance.

Applications are subject to collective bargaining unless there is a written agreement between the district and the exclusive bargaining representatives to waive collective bargaining. Joint applications are permitted.

Projects selected for the REACH FOR EXCELLENCE program receive an automatic waiver from the statutory requirements relating to teacher contact hours and basic education program hours offerings.

Selected projects receive REACH FOR EXCELLENCE program grant funds in two steps:

1. A grant is awarded for planning activities relating to implementation of the REACH project (including planning, staff development, purchase of materials, supplies, and

resources, and development of new assessment measures), and for initial implementation of the project.

2. A REACH achievement award is provided based on "performance" eligibility. Annual eligibility and the amount of the award are based on the project's progress toward the target educational outcomes for the identified skills.

It is the responsibility of the school staff to determine how the REACH achievement award will be used and to determine, if applicable to the project, how much each staff member will receive.

REACH achievement awards may be used for the same purposes as the first grant, as well as for stipends or salary and compensation increases for staff through supplemental contracts. Stipends are not applied against the district's salary schedule and are not an ongoing obligation of the state.

Planning and initial implementation grants are for the 1991-92 and 1992-93 school years. Commencing with the end of the 1993-94 school year, and each school year thereafter, REACH projects are evaluated by the State Board to determine their eligibility to receive a REACH achievement award.

Reporting requirements are established for the projects and the State Board. The SBE report due December 1, 1996, must:

- o Indicate the most common basic academic, workplace, and life and family skills and accompanying target educational outcomes identified by the REACH projects;
- o Indicate the development or use of measures to assess student performance other than standardized tests;
- o Include recommendations on the feasibility of implementing statewide basic academic, workplace, and life and family skills, educational outcomes, and context and process indicators; and
- o Comment on or recommend how the salary allocation schedule developed by the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) Committee might reflect a school performance assessment model based on basic academic, workplace, and life and family skills, educational outcomes, and context and process indicators.

Timelines are established for the program: Initial applications must be received by March 15, 1992; initial projects are selected by the State Board by May 31, 1992; and initial implementation of projects, following planning, begins no later than September 1, 1993. The REACH FOR EXCELLENCE grant program expires December 31, 1998.

Upon request, the SPI or educational service district must provide technical assistance with development of grant

applications and with development of performance assessment measures other than standardized test scores.

PART II - COMPENSATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The SPI, in consultation with teachers, classified employees, administrators, school directors, business and labor, and parents and legislators, conducts a study of compensation for educational employees. The study takes into consideration the relationship between compensation for educational employees and identified statutory programs and provisions, as well as salaries paid in other states and in other professions. The SPI, based on the study findings, submits to the Legislature and the Governor by December 1, 1991, a plan to bring salaries to among the top ten states by the 1997-98 school year.

PART III - COMPENSATION MAINTENANCE PLAN

The SPI, in consultation with the same groups as under PART II, studies and recommends to the Legislature and the Governor by December 1, 1991, a plan to maintain salaries at the levels established under the PART II plan.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

Reach for Excellence Grant Program. Language is added clarifying that the results from the REACH FOR EXCELLENCE program shall be a basis for the development of new goals, standards, and assessments for the state education system.

Additional automatic waivers are provided to REACH projects from requirements relating to student learning objectives, school building self-study, and commingling of funds appropriated for certain categorical programs.

Grant applications are not subject to collective bargaining but procedures are defined if collective bargaining provisions need to be modified to submit an application for the REACH FOR EXCELLENCE program.

Applicants for the REACH FOR EXCELLENCE program may select an additional life and family skills focus area relating to the arts, performing arts, and music.

The working committee will also assist the State Board in monitoring projects development and use of new student assessment measures in addition to standardized tests.

The OSPI compensation study is expanded to include a review of the relationship between staffing and compensation levels for certificated and classified staff.

School-Site Councils. School districts are authorized to adopt policies permitting the creation of school site-based councils. Site-based councils may use REACH planning grant funds but only for activities directly related to a REACH project.

Business-School Partnerships. Employers are encouraged to provide employees release time to perform or participate in school activities.

The OSPI establishes an annual award program to recognize employers who provide release time to employees to participate in or perform school activities.

State-Level Assistance and Information Sharing. The Washington State Library Commission is directed to assist teachers and other educators to acquire information about educational resources and research.

Appropriations. The \$100,000 appropriation to OSPI for the compensation studies is reduced to \$35,000. The remaining \$65,000 is appropriated to the state Library Commission.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE:

The appropriations of \$34,000,000 for the REACH FOR EXCELLENCE grant program, \$35,000 to OSPI and \$65,000 to the state Library Commission are deleted and replaced with null and void clauses making each part of the bill contingent on funding in the budget.

The intent section regarding compensation improvement plans is deleted.

References to "salaries" in the compensation improvement plan and compensation maintenance plan are replaced with "total compensation."

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

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

TESTIMONY FOR:

Certain factors are important to successful restructuring: greater local flexibility for the use of time and developing curricular programs; multi-year planning and field testing; development of new measures to assess student performance; accountability tied to bonus funding only for documented improvements in student learning; focusing on results/targeted educational objectives rather than on process; providing incentives for participation and positive change. Top-down restructuring does not work. Bottom-up restructuring is more meaningful.

Teachers need to be part of restructuring efforts. They need the necessary time to be effective participants in restructuring and need to be compensated for that time. The

state needs to establish a long-term/long-range salary policy for educators.

The development and use of student assessment measures other than standardized tests is important. There is more to education than learning the curricular material but that is what standardized tests are designed to measure. Standardized tests measure what the student knows, not whether the student can apply what they know. It is important that professional educators be involved in the development of new assessment measures and new standards of performance.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED (Education): Vi Walls, Edmonds School District Board of Directors (pro); Steve Nielsen and Phil Bussey, Washington Roundtable (pro); Fay Page, Washington State PTA (pro); Bob Maier, Washington Education Association (pro); John Kvamme, Tacoma Public Schools (pro); Walter Ball, Association of Washington School Principals (pro); Kris Van Gorkom, Washington Association of School Administrators (pro); Norm Wisner, Superintendent, Tumwater School District (pro); Roy "Tiny" Jorgensen, President, State Board of Education (pro); Marcia Costello, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (pro); Dwayne Slate, Washington State School Directors' Association (pro)

TESTIFIED (Ways & Means): No one