

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2850

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to education.

Brief Description: Changing education provisions.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Dorn, Brough, Cothorn and Karahalios).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 4, 1994, DPS;
Passed House, February 15, 1994, 97-0;
Amended by Senate;
Conference Committee Report adopted;
Passed Legislature, March 9, 1994, 95-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Dorn, Chair; Cothorn, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; B. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle; Carlson; G. Cole; Eide; G. Fisher; Hansen; Holm; Jones; Karahalios; J. Kohl; Patterson; Pruitt; Roland; Stevens and L. Thomas.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1209 (1993) included a number of programs and activities intended to improve student learning in the state's K-12 education system.

The bill included, among other things, Student Learning Improvement grants, the development of a statewide technology plan, the establishment of a Joint Select Committee on Education Restructuring and a new Center for the Improvement of Student Learning.

Student Learning Improvement grants

According to ESHB 1209, funding for the Student Learning Improvement grants is to be based on the number of certificated staff, classified instructional aides and classified secretaries in schools that apply for grants.

However, budget language provided funding based only on the number of certificated staff in each school.

Also, budget language has been interpreted to read that these funds may only be used for certificated staff. This contradicts language in ESHB 1209 that states that the funding formula is for allocation purposes only and that local school representatives are to determine how the funds will be spent.

Statewide Technology Plan

ESHB 1209 required that the Superintendent of Public Instruction develop a statewide technology plan and recommendations on a technology grant program by December 15, 1993. While progress has been made in both areas, participants have requested that more time be provided before final products are due.

Select Committee on Education Restructuring

One of the tasks given to the Select Committee on Education Restructuring is to review all laws pertaining to K-12 education, except laws involving the "health, safety and civil rights" of students and staff. In the process of the committee's review, some members found that excluding laws involving health, safety and civil rights prevented the committee from reviewing the entire K-12 education system, and, if needed, from improving health, safety and civil rights laws.

Center for the Improvement of Student Learning

The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, which was created in ESHB 1209, replaced the State Clearinghouse for Education Information. However, several references in statute to the clearinghouse were not removed.

School Report Cards/Descriptive guide

ESHB 1209 requires schools to complete annual "report cards" for parents and the community. Since 1977, schools have been required to complete a descriptive guide that serves a similar function.

Education Fiscal Committee

An Education Fiscal Committee was created in ESHB 1209 to review the education funding system. The due date for the committee's final recommendations is January 16, 1995.

Summary of Bill: Student Learning Improvement grants:

Changes are made in the Student Learning Improvement grant program to clarify that funds may be used for staff development and planning for certificated and classified staff and for site-based planning activities. Funds may be used in July and August prior to the school year. Also,

funding allocations are to be based on the number of certificated staff in each building, and funding for four "days" will be provided for each of the three years of the grant.

School districts are strongly encouraged not to supplant funding previously used for planning and staff development, and SPI is required to estimate the increase in planning, staff development, and site-based activities occurring as a result of the grants.

Statewide Technology Plan: The due dates for the statewide technology plan and technology grant program recommendations are delayed until September 1, 1994.

Select Committee on Education Restructuring: The Select Committee on Education Restructuring is allowed to review K-12 education statutes pertaining to the health, safety and civil rights of students. The due date for recommendations on information and data needs is delayed one year until January 1996.

Center for the Improvement of Student Learning: References to the State Clearinghouse for Education Information are deleted in statute.

School Report Cards/Descriptive guide

The requirement that school districts complete a descriptive guide is repealed.

Student Learning

A list of basic values and character traits is added to the Basic Education Act. These values and traits include such things as honesty, self-discipline, respect for authority, and healthy behavior. They are not intended to be assessed or be standards for graduation.

Education Fiscal Committee

The Education Fiscal Committee's due date for its final recommendations is delayed one year until December 15, 1995.

Commission on Student Learning

A double amendment in the statutes is corrected.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 27, 1994.

Effective Date: Changes to the Student Learning Improvement Grants take effect immediately. The character traits and values provision takes effect September 1, 1994. Other sections are effective ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This will help in the implementation of the Education Reform bill, especially with regard to the Student Learning Improvement grants.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Susan Patrick, Superintendent of Public Instruction (pro).