

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2604

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to parent participation in education.

Brief Description: Requiring a study of the impact of parental involvement on academic achievement.

Sponsors: Representatives Mason, Radcliff, Johnson, Carlson, Kessler, Sheahan, Van Luven, Cole, Dickerson, Butler, Hatfield, Kenney, O'Brien, Chopp, Keiser, Anderson, Ogden, Costa, Quall and Gombosky.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/30/98, 2/4/98 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Johnson, Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Linville; Smith; Sterk; Sump; Talcott and Veloria.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background: The 1995 National Education Goals Report states parental involvement in a child's education is a critical component in the scholastic success of that child. It also states that a growing body of research suggests that increased family involvement in a child's education is associated with higher mathematics and reading scores, decreased likelihood that a student will be suspended or expelled from school, and greater student participation in extracurricular school activities. A parent and teacher partnership in a child's education can have a dramatically positive impact on student test scores, behavior, attitudes toward school, and graduation rates. It can also lead to better grades; improved attendance; improved attitudes in middle and high school; and a reduced likelihood that a student will repeat a grade or be in the lower half of the student's class.

The U.S. Department of Education reported in its publication, "Strong Families, Strong Schools," that (1) teachers rated strengthening parental involvement in their children's

education as the most important educational policy priority in the coming years; (2) that nearly half of 14- to 17-year-olds reported that they would like to talk to their parents more about school work; and (3) that nine out of 10 business executives rated lack of parental involvement as the biggest obstacle to school reform. Many family involvement programs involve long-term intervention to help students complete high school and continue on to higher education.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Legislature finds that there is a need for greater parental participation in a child's education. The office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will study and make recommendations on ways to facilitate parent involvement in education, school-to-home communications, and parental management in the education of children from prekindergarten through higher education. In its study, OSPI will consult widely with parent groups and parents of children of different abilities and backgrounds. OSPI will evaluate the methods used in this and other states to use parent involvement to increase academic achievement, improve student conduct and elevate levels of college enrollment. OSPI will also evaluate and recommend models and best practices for assuring effective communication between parents and the education system. OSPI will also recommend policies to ensure participation, regardless of ability to pay, by parent volunteers and all students in extracurricular school activities, including field trips, held during the regular school day. The agency will work with the Higher Education Coordinating Board on the study. By December 1, 1998, the OSPI will provide to the Governor, the House and Senate Higher Education Committees, parent groups, and others a final report describing the agency's findings and recommendations.

The study and reporting requirements expire on December 30, 1998.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The elements of the study are clarified. In conducting the study, OSPI must consult widely with parent groups and parents of children of different abilities and background, including children from rural and urban areas. OSPI will also recommend policies to ensure participation, regardless of ability to pay, by parent volunteers and all students in extracurricular school activities, including field trips, held during the regular school day. OSPI will share its report with parent groups, school directors, school districts, and other interested parties.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. Requested on the Substitute on February 6, 1998.

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

Testimony For: Parents and schools need to become partners in the education of children. Parents need to understand the relevance of the new assessments, the implications of education reform, and the efforts that they can undertake to help their

children succeed in school. Parents need information so they can manage their children's education. They need to know exactly what their children's strengths and problems are, what strategies they need to take to help the children be more successful in school, and what the interventions should be if those strategies are unsuccessful. All children need an individualized education plan. Teachers are not trained in how to effectively involve parents in the education process. Parental involvement improves academic achievement, decreases behavior problems, builds family unity and improves college attendance rates. Parents are backup teachers. Research results overwhelmingly prove that effective partnerships between parents and schools are critical to student success.

Testimony Against: Parents are responsible for their children's education. The state does not need to spend money to study ways to help them carry out those responsibilities.

Testified: Representative Mason, prime sponsor; Bill Sellars, The Arc of Washington; Jody Drew, teacher; Kathy Baxter, parent; Florence Adeyemi, African Forum News; Michele Anciaux, WSPTA; Susan Fake, parent; Cheryl Jouper, parent; Audry Adams, parent; George Fleming, Seattle Public Schools; Rainer Houser, Washington Principals Association; and Donna Salcedo, WEA (all pro). John Marshall, citizen (con).