

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6574

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to the learning materials loan program.

Brief Description: Authorizing learning materials to be loaned to private school students.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Johnson, Stevens, Wood, Winsley, Deccio, Schow, Oke, McCaslin, Rossi, Hochstatter, Swecker, Sellar, Morton, McDonald and Roach).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/24/98, 2/26/98 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Johnson, Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Linville; Quall; Smith; Sterk; Sump and Talcott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Veloria.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background: Local school boards may set policies for the selection, granting, and loaning of instructional materials to public school students. Districts also may enter into joint purchasing agreements with private schools.

Summary of Bill: A local school district may loan learning materials to students who attend private schools in the district. A private school desiring to borrow materials must submit an annual request for learning materials to the public school district in which the private school is located. The school district may then provide the materials through a loan agreement and subject to certain guidelines:

- The local school district must make a good faith effort to accommodate requests for learning materials.

- Districts cannot limit learning material support based on a student's economic status, but may limit such loans to students of state-approved private schools.
- Loaned learning materials cannot promote or deter sectarian or religious activities of the private school. A school district also cannot lend materials designed for religious instruction to the private school.
- Student learning materials eligible for loan are limited to textbooks and workbooks only.
- The state cannot adopt new laws or rules that directly or indirectly impact the autonomy of a private school in response to a private school student receiving learning materials support.
- All loaned materials will remain the property of the school district at all times.
- To assist the state, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction may identify currently existing, nonsectarian, statewide private school organizations to act as liaisons with the state for approved private schools whose students receive or desire to receive loaned learning materials.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 1998.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 1998.

Testimony For: This bill grants students in private schools the same ability to borrow learning materials as home school students. The bill requires that schools make a good faith effort to loan the materials and includes workbooks in the definition of learning materials.

Testimony Against: This bill should require that a school district only lend surplus materials to private school students.

Testified: Virginia DeForest, American Association of University Women (con); Jessie Dye, Catholic Conference (pro); and Stephen Dinger, Washington Federation of Independent Schools (pro).