

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2330

FULL VETO

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Authorizing church schools.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Hickel, Johnson, Backlund and D. Sommers).

House Committee on Education

Senate Committee on Education

Background: All parents of children from 8 to 18 years old are required to send these children to school. The children must attend public school unless they are enrolled in a private school, are receiving home-based instruction, are attending an education center, are excused by the school district superintendent under certain circumstances, or are 16 years old and meet certain criteria.

Private schools are subject to less regulation than public schools, although private schools must be approved by the State Board of Education and comply with certain statutory requirements. Private schools must annually file a certification with the Superintendent of Public Instruction that the private school meets minimum statutory requirements, and must develop a process to correct any deficiencies. These requirements include: (1) the school year must consist of at least 180 school days; (2) all classroom teachers must be certificated by this state except for teachers of religion courses and others with unusual competence who are supervised by a certificated teacher; and (3) the school facilities must be adequate to meet the program offered by the school and meet reasonable health and safety requirements. The private school curriculum must include instruction in basic skills. Private school students are not required to meet student learning goals, obtain a certificate of mastery, or be assessed under the state assessment program. Private schools are authorized to operate an extension program for parents or legal guardians to teach their children.

Private schools must report information on their students required by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to the appropriate educational service district. Private schools must comply with rules relating to private schools promulgated by the State Board of Education.

Summary: Parents may comply with the requirement that they send their children to school by sending their children to a religiously affiliated exempt school. A religiously affiliated exempt school is a private school that: (1) offers instruction in grades K-12, in any combination including single grade schools; (2) is operated by a

ministry of a local church, group of churches, denomination, religiously-affiliated school, or association of churches on a nonprofit basis; and (3) does not receive any state or federal funding.

Religiously affiliated exempt schools are exempt from the minimum requirements that private schools must meet, except that they must have adequate facilities. These schools do not have to be approved by the State Board of Education, and do not have to report their attendance and enrollment.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 71 25

Senate 30 18