

# HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

## HB 2330

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**Title:** An act relating to church schools.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing church schools.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Hickel, Johnson, Backlund and  
D. Sommers.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Meeting Date:** January 16, 1998

**Bill Analysis Prepared by:** Charlie Gavigan, Counsel (786-7340)

**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 these minimum statutory requirements, and must develop a process to correct any deficiencies. These requirements include: (1) the school year consists 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 of Bill:** Parents can comply with the requirement that they send their children to school by sending their children to a church school. A church school is a 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, or association of churches on a nonprofit basis; and (3) does not receive any state or federal funding.

Church schools are not required to certify that they meet the minimum statutory requirements which must be met by private schools. Classroom teachers at church schools are not required to have a state certification. Information on enrollment and attendance at a church school is filed with the local public school district, rather than with the educational service district as is the process for private schools.

**Appropriation:** None

**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.

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