

# **HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS**

## **2SSB 5508**

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**Title:** An act relating to reading accountability.

**Brief Description:** Enacting the third grade reading accountability act.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hochstatter, Oke, Morton, Swecker, Finkbeiner, Horn, Stevens and Schow).

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### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

***Meeting Date:*** April 1, 1997.

***Staff Contact:*** Joe Hauth (786-7111).

***Background:*** There is general agreement that reading is a fundamental basic academic skill. Research suggests that students who do not achieve reading literacy by third grade fall behind their classmates and are less successful in school.

*Current law encourages school districts to test second grade students to help identify students in need of academic skills assistance. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must conduct a standard, norm-referenced assessment of fourth, eighth, and 11 grade students' academic reading skills annually.*

***Summary of Bill:*** A third grade reading goal is established. By 2002, 90 percent or more of all third grade students will read at or above grade level by the end of their third grade.

*School districts must use classroom-based assessments to annually evaluate kindergarten through second grade students.*

*SPI must develop a standardized, norm-referenced, third-grade reading assessment. The assessment must be available before May 15 of each year to school districts and parents of the students tested.*

*Beginning in spring of 1998, school districts must use the standardized reading assessment conducted by SPI to annually assess the reading level of its third grade students. Each school must establish a building baseline of reading ability based on the 1998 test results.*

*Each school is expected to make an annual incremental improvement. The annual incremental improvement is that increase in the number of third grade students,*

*reading at or above grade level, needed to progress from the 1998 building baseline to the state reading goal by 2002.*

*Seven levels of accountability for achieving the reading goal are identified:*

- (1) Parents: Parents are recognized as a child's first and most influential teacher. School districts must encourage and support parents in reading to their children at least 20 minutes a day from birth through third grade.*
- (2) State: The SPI must report annually to the Legislature and public on state-wide progress toward the reading goal, provide information to school districts regarding best practices in reading, and confer with the Commission on Student Learning to assure consistent approaches.*
- (3) Professional Organizations: The SPI must coordinate with relevant professional organizations and report to the Legislature on professional support of the reading goal.*
- (4) Principals: Elementary school principals are expected to play a leadership role in reaching the reading goal.*
- (5) Teachers: Third grade teachers must annually report the child's reading level beginning in June 1998.*
- (6) Schools: Schools must annually report to the community the number, actual percent, and adjusted percent of third grade students reading at or above third grade level, and the distribution and range of all reading scores by monthly increments on the third grade reading assessment.*
- (7) School Districts: School districts must report third grade reading test results to the Superintendent of Public Instruction annually, beginning in October 1998.*

*Financial incentives are provided to school buildings for the purpose of improving reading ability and reaching the reading goal. Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, school districts receive \$4,000 for each elementary school achieving its annual incremental improvement, and \$2,000 for each elementary school achieving one-half of its annual incremental improvement. School districts with schools that maintain the reading goal will continue receiving \$4,000 per elementary school annually. The SPI must adopt rules to prorate the amounts for schools with a third grade full-time equivalent enrollment of fewer than 75 students.*

**Fiscal Note:** *Requested on March 21, 1997.*

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