

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 2849

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, February 27, 1998  
Ways & Means, March 2, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to student achievement accountability.

**Brief Description:** Enhancing student achievement accountability.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Talcott, Johnson, B. Thomas, Kastama, L. Thomas, Benson, Lambert, Alexander, Robertson, Pennington, McDonald, Lisk, Cairnes, Radcliff, Ballasiotes, Zellinsky, Backlund, D. Schmidt, Delvin, Carlson, Sump, Chandler, Smith and Thompson).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 2/27/98 [DP-WM].  
Ways & Means: 3/2/98 [DP, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter, Chair; Finkbeiner, Vice Chair; Goings, Johnson, McAuliffe and Rasmussen.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Deccio, Vice Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Hochstatter, Long, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, Schow, Swecker and Zarelli.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland and Thibaudeau.

**Staff:** Bill Freund (786-7441)

**Background:** *K-4 Reading Accountability System:* In 1997, the Legislature directed the Commission on Student Learning (CSL) to make recommendations regarding a statewide accountability system for K-4 reading. On December 3, 1997, the CSL presented the recommendations to the Joint Select Committee on Education Restructuring. The initial recommendations address goals, reporting and a review process.

- Goals: By December 15, 1998, school boards must set three-year, district-wide goals to increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed the fourth grade reading standard on

the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The school boards must calculate their goals by first determining the percentage of students who did not meet the standards in 1997 or 1998. The districts must then multiply that number by .25. The resulting percentage is the goal the school district must meet by the end of three years. Districts must also specify annual increments necessary to achieve the goal. Each elementary school must also establish a three year goal to be approved by the school board. The aggregate of the schools' goals must meet or exceed the district's goal.

- **Reporting:** Twice a year, school boards must report to parents the goals of the district and the schools, and the student performance relative to the goals. Once a year, school boards must report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and the local media on the progress made toward achieving the goals by the district and the schools. The reported information must be included in the annual school performance report. Additionally, district-level and school-level plans to achieve the goals must be available to parents.
- **Review process:** By the end of the three-year period, SPI and the school districts must review the progress made toward achieving the goal and establish goals for the next three-year period.

*Second Grade Reading Tests:* In 1997, the Legislature required the SPI to identify a collection of tests to measure second grade reading accuracy and fluency. Pilot projects were authorized to use the tests and grants were provided to enhance reading instruction. Beginning in the 1998-99 school year, school districts must use a test from the collection to test second grade reading accuracy and fluency.

*Fourth Grade Norm-referenced Standardized Achievement Test:* State law requires SPI to annually conduct a fourth grade statewide norm-referenced standardized achievement test. The test assesses students' skills in reading, mathematics, and language arts. SPI annually reports the test scores to the Legislature.

*Washington Assessment of Student Learning:* State law required the CSL to develop elementary level assessments for reading, writing, communications, and mathematics. Beginning in the 1997-98 school year, school districts were required to participate in the elementary assessments.

**Summary of Bill:** *K-4 Reading Accountability System:* CSL's recommendations regarding a statewide accountability system for K-4 reading are enacted. Additionally, by December 1, 2000, SPI must report to the Senate and House education committees on the progress made toward achieving the goals and provide recommendations on setting reading goals for the next three years.

*Second Grade Reading Tests:* It is clarified that the second grade reading accuracy and fluency test must be administered annually.

*Fourth Grade Norm-referenced Standardized Achievement Test:* The requirement for a statewide norm-referenced standardized achievement test in reading, mathematics, and language arts currently administered in the fourth grade is changed to require administration of a third grade test. Students scoring substantially below grade level in reading, as determined by

SPI, must be tested at least once more while in third grade. Results of the reading tests must be provided to the student's parents.

Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL): Beginning September 10, 1998, SPI must annually report the WASL scores to school, school districts, and the Legislature. Additionally, SPI must post the WASL scores by school and school district.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The Accountability Task Force presented good recommendations, which should be adopted. They preserve local control while ensuring accountability. A reasonable goal will be established which will focus districts on reading. There are no sanctions or interventions proposed in order to provide time to gather good data before imposing sanctions or interventions on districts or schools. Moving the fourth grade test to the third grade creates a good reading continuum for students. Posting scores on the Internet is a good way to share the information.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Talcott, original prime sponsor; Steve Mullin, Washington Roundtable (pro).