

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 2085

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to programs addressing disruptive students in regular classrooms.

Brief Description: Creating programs addressing disruptive students in regular classrooms.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Education (Originally sponsored by Representatives Quall, Talcott, Haigh, Carlson, Santos, Linville, Cox, Kessler, Morris, Murray, McDonald, O'Brien, Anderson, Thomas, Ogden, Poulsen, Rockefeller, Lovick, Kenney, Wolfe, Stensen, Schual-Berke, Tokuda, Ruderman, Keiser, Wood, Constantine and Lantz).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/22/99, 2/25/99 [DPS];

Appropriations: 3/5/99, 3/6/99 [DP2S(w/o sub ED)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/15/99, 96-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/12/99, 45-3.

House Concurred.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- The OSPI will conduct a series of professional development institutes to help teams from school districts learn how to deal effectively with disruptive students and create plans to work with those students in the classroom and in alternative settings.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Schindler, Republican Vice Chair; Carlson; Cox; Keiser; Rockefeller; Santos; D. Schmidt; Schual-Berke; Stensen; Sump and Wensman.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Education. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Huff, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Alexander, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; D. Schmidt, Republican Vice Chair; Barlean; Benson; Boldt; Carlson; Clements; Cody; Crouse; Gombosky; Grant; Kagi; Keiser; Kenney; Lambert; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McIntire; McMorris; Mulliken; Parlette; Regala; Rockefeller; Ruderman; Sullivan; Tokuda and Wensman.

Staff: Jack Daray (786-7178).

Background:

Since 1996, the Legislature has provided funding to defray the initial costs school districts incur when they implement alternative schools and programs for at-risk and disruptive students. School districts receive one-year start-up grants through a competitive request for proposal process. The grants cover the initial costs of planning, staff recruitment and training, the purchase of equipment and supplies, and other significant one-time costs. State basic education monies provide support for program operations after the first year. To date, the Legislature has appropriated \$3,000,000 for these start-up grants.

Since 1996, five basic alternative school or program models have evolved. They are alternative schools as a separate organization and site, schools within a school, programs as a part of an existing school, court detention schools, and after-school or truancy board support programs. Of the 25 programs supported during the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years, only two programs included elementary school students among the other students served. Eight served middle school students exclusively. Six served middle and high school students.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) presented a report on the grants to the Legislature in February 1999. The report included a component evaluating the effectiveness of the alternative programs. More than half of the programs reported

improvements in student achievement, attendance, attitudes, and social skills. The applicants also reported a decrease in disciplinary actions and incidents. The SPI recommended that the Legislature continue funding the grants and increase the appropriations to allow more districts to participate. The SPI also recommended implementation of an electronic data base to facilitate reporting, evaluation and information sharing. Finally, the SPI recommended that the Legislature fund additional training to help teachers implement innovative strategies for working with at-risk and disruptive students.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature finds that teachers, principals, and other school staff need training in effective strategies for handling disruptive students.

If funding is provided in the budget, the SPI will conduct a series of professional development institutes during the summer of 2000 on research-based strategies for handling disruptive students. The institutes will focus on two major issues: dealing with disruption in regular classrooms, and the design and implementation of effective alternative learning programs and settings for students who exhibit frequent and prolonged disruptive behavior in regular classrooms. School districts will have an opportunity to send teams of teachers, principals, and other staff to the institutes. Participants will develop district plans to handle disruptive students. Elementary and middle school participants are encouraged to formulate school building plans as well.

Beginning with the 1999-2000 school year, elementary and junior high schools are encouraged to provide time for staff from regular education and special education programs to share successful practices for managing disruptive students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 18, 1999.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: (Education) (Original Bill) Discipline issues are a major challenge for public schools. The issues are escalating as additional high-needs children enter the schools. When disruption occurs in a classroom, learning stops. This legislation is an important tool for teachers and principals. It provides additional training to help teachers work with disruptive students in the classroom. The legislation also provides additional resources to help schools provide intensive assistance and appropriate educational programs outside the classroom for persistently disruptive students. The program is flexible and allows schools to tailor their programs to meet local needs.

An additional safeguard: a high percentage of the school's teachers must agree to participate in the program before the school is eligible to participate in the grant program.

(Appropriations) (Substitute bill) There is a need to deal with disruptive students to reduce distractions from learning. There is need for an earlier focus to dealing with alternative learning situations since there are very few program options for young students at the present time.

Testimony Against: (Education) (Original Bill) The program should be replaced by or refocused to include successful programs offered in the private sector. These private sector programs are proven, research-based, and cost-effective. One such program, called the Ombudsman program would be a better model than the program proposed in this legislation.

(Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Education) (Support) (Original Bill) Rep. Quall, prime sponsor; Rainer Houser, Mike McDonald, Lisa Griebel, and Tim Sullivan, Association of Washington School Principals; Lloyd Gardner, citizen; Bob Butts, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association; Barbara Casey, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; and Sam Elwonger, independent.

(Education) (Opposed as written) Lois McMahan, citizen.

(Appropriations) Representative Quall, prime sponsor; and Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals.