

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1462

Title: An act relating to K-12 accountability and assistance.

Brief Description: Changing school accountability and assistance provisions.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Talcott, Haigh, Wensman, Stensen, Ogden, Santos, O'Brien, Rockefeller, Regala, Sullivan, Linville, Lantz, Lovick, Doumit, Reardon, Cooper, Scott, Dickerson, Kessler, Hatfield, Gombosky, Murray, Carlson, McIntire, Hurst, Edwards, Conway, Wood, Morris, Keiser, Fisher, Schual-Berke, Dunshee, D. Schmidt and Kenney.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: February 11, 1999.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background: **Goals:** In 1998, the Legislature accepted and required by law the first accountability recommendations of the Commission on Student Learning's Accountability Task Force. 2SHB 2849 required each school district to establish a three-year district goal to increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed the reading standard on the fourth grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The districts were directed to establish annual increments to meet the goal. The goal cannot be less than the district's total percentage of students who did not meet the reading standard multiplied by 25 percent. Additionally, each elementary school was required to establish a three-year goal to be approved by the school board. The aggregate of the school goals must meet or exceed the district-wide goals.

Reporting: Each school district must annually report, in writing, the district's progress toward meeting the reading goals to the parents, community and local media. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must report the fourth grade WASL results to schools, school districts and the Legislature, including posting the results on the SPI Internet site.

The Commission on Student Learning (CSL): CSL consists of three members of the State Board of Education and eight Governor appointees. The primary duties of CSL are to identify what all public school students should know and be able to do (the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs)), develop student assessments to test EALRs, and develop a statewide school accountability system. **CSL is required to make recommendations regarding a statewide accountability system by June 30, 1999. The accountability program must assess each school against its own**

baseline, schools with similar characteristics, and schools statewide. CSL is also required to recommend a school assistance program, a system to intervene in schools and school districts in which students persistently fail to meet state standards, and an awards program to provide incentives for school staff. CSL expires on June 30, 1999. CSL must transfer EALRs, the completed assessments and the assessments in development to SPI before it expires.

The Learning Assistance Program(LAP): LAP is a statewide program for K-9 students who are below grade level in basic skills. To receive funds each school district must develop a plan for the use of the funds. A list of services or activities that may be supported by the program is provided in statute. The majority of LAP funds are allocated based on the number of students scoring in the bottom quartile on the statewide norm-referenced test. Eight percent of the allocation is based on a poverty factor. School districts may use the funds to help struggling students in elementary school through the ninth grade. SPI monitors the programs at least once every three years. A waiver of program requirements is available until June 30, 1999.

The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL): In the 1993 Education Reform Act, CISL was created within the office of SPI to serve as a clearinghouse for successful education restructuring programs and best practices to improve student learning as well as provide training and consultation services. CISL must work in conjunction with the Commission on Student Learning (CSL), Educational Service Districts (ESDs), and institutions of higher education. SPI must annually report to CSL on the activities of the CISL.

Student Learning Improvement Grants (SLIGs): In the 1993 Education Reform Act, the Legislature created SLIGs for the 1994-95 school year through the 1996-97 school year to provide staff development and planning to improve student learning. The Legislature has funded some form of SLIGs since 1993.

Accountability Task Force: CSL convened an Accountability Task Force to develop recommendations for a statewide school accountability system. CSL adopted the task force recommendations on October 19, 1998. This bill draft contains the recommendations.

Summary of Bill: CSL's recommendations for a statewide school accountability system are enacted.

Goals: The long range goal is that all public school students meet the standards. The mid-term goal is that at least 80 percent meet the standards and achieve a Certificate of Mastery (COM). In 2001, CSL must reset the state reading goal. In 2002, CSL must reset the state math goal. CSL may establish goals for other content and grade levels when WASL assessments are required to be administered. High school goals must include the percent of students achieving a certificate of mastery (COM) and a reduction in dropout rates.

By 2001-02, schools and school districts must set math goals using the same process as established in 1998 to set reading goals. Each school district must establish a district goal to increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed the math standard on the fourth grade WASL and establish annual increments to meet the goal. The goal can not be less than the district's total percentage of students who did not meet the math standard multiplied by 25 percent. Additionally, each elementary school must establish a goal to be approved by the school board. The aggregate of the school goals must meet or exceed the district-wide goals.

Reporting: Each school district must annually report the district's progress toward meeting the reading and math goals to the parents and community at a public meeting, in addition to the written reports required to the parents, community and local media. Schools and school districts with fewer than ten students in a grade level will not be required to report the progress toward meeting the goals, but must report to parents and the community their plans to improve student performance.

SPI must report to the public, schools, school districts, and the Legislature all WASL results by school and school district using two methods: (1) the percent of students meeting the standards; and (2) a learning improvement index that shows changes in student performance within the four performance levels: (a) well below standard; (b) below standard; (c) meets standard; (d) above standard. SPI must also report other specified data. SPI must ensure that the data is complete and accurate prior to reporting. SPI must monitor the percentage and the number of special education and limited English students exempt from taking the assessments to ensure compliance with the exemption guidelines.

Beginning in December 2000, CSL must annually report to the legislative education committees on the progress that has been made in achieving the reading and mathematics goals and on the setting of other goals. CSL must annually review the reporting system and recommend improvements to SPI.

Commission on Student Learning (CSL): The expiration date for CSL is eliminated. The membership of CSL is changed to include SPI and two, instead of three, members of the State Board of Education. The eight Governor appointees are retained. All appointments must be made by July 1, 1999. Appointees serve for a term of four years but may be reappointed. The current duties of CSL are retained and expanded to encompass accountability duties, including making recommendations on school recognition and intervention to SPI. No CSL duties are transferred to SPI. CSL may appoint an executive director and other staff. Obsolete language regarding completed duties and reports is deleted. There is an emergency clause for this section to take effect immediately.

The Learning Assistance Program(LAP): LAP program is modified. The original program intent language is repealed. The program is changed to address individual K-9 students who are not likely to meet or did not meet WASL standards, or schools with a high percentage of low performing students or students from low-income

households. An additional plan component is required. Additional activities are permitted under the program, including extended learning opportunities and volunteer coordinators. The allocation of the funds is based solely on a poverty factor. SPI must annually evaluate the effectiveness of the school district's programs based on the results of the state-mandated assessments (norm-referenced tests and WASL). The waiver of statutory requirements is retained and is not eliminated in 1999, except that the provision relating to monitoring effectiveness cannot be waived.

The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL): The information to be provided by CISL is expanded to include information on systems to analyze student assessment data and technology systems. CISL must also develop and maintain an Internet web-site to provide access to information. The list of entities which CISL must work with is broadened to include education, parent, community and business organizations. CISL's training services are expanded to include regional summer institutes. The annual report by SPI to CSL on the activities of CISL is eliminated.

Student Learning Improvement Grants (SLIGs): SLIGs are repealed.

Accountability Implementation funds(AIFs): To the extent funds are appropriated, SPI must allocate funds to school districts to develop and implement student learning improvement plans. The plans must be available to the public. Acceptable professional development activities for expenditure of the AIFs are listed. To be eligible for AIFs in 1999-2000, school district superintendents and school principals must certify that expenditure of the funds meets the statutory requirements. To be eligible in 2000-01, the school district superintendents and school principals must certify that they have analyzed the expenditure of all sources of funds for professional development and planning and all funds will be used to improve student learning. The School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf are eligible to receive AIFs. AIFs are not part of the basic education program as defined by the state.

Emergency Targeted Assistance to Schools: To the extent funds are appropriated, SPI must provide two-year grants to schools to develop and implement comprehensive improvement plans. Components required to be in plan are listed. Priority for funds must be given to schools that need to improve student achievement substantially. Other criteria for awarding the grants are provided. The school board must approve the grant applications before submission to SPI.

Helping Corps: A regional "helping corps" of school improvement coordinators and specialists is created to provide schools and school districts with school improvement assistance. A statewide school improvement coordinator directs the corps. Types of assistance to be provided are listed. The specialists are not permanent employees, but serve on a rotating basis for one to three years.

State Recognition: SPI must annually recognize schools and school districts based on improvements in WASL results and criteria recommended by CSL.

State Intervention: School districts have the primary responsibility for intervening in schools with large numbers of students who are not achieving EALRs. Beginning in 2001-02, CSL must evaluate elementary schools in which students are showing little or no improvement. CSL must evaluate middle and high schools three years after assessments are mandatory. CSL must use other information in addition to assessment results to determine whether to recommend additional state-level assistance. If, after a reasonable period of time, a district's efforts have failed to improve student achievement, then CSL may recommend that SPI intervene in the school district. SPI may intervene and take appropriate corrective measures.

Performance Incentive Study: SPI must conduct a study of performance incentive systems in public education and report to all school districts and to the Legislature by January 15, 2000.

Consolidated planning: SPI must consolidate and streamline the requirements for major state and federal categorical and grant programs and increase the use of electronic applications and reporting.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 1999.

Effective Date: Section 801 takes effect immediately. The rest of the bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.