

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2085

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

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

Sponsors: 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.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: February 22, 1999.

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

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. The Legislature also finds that there are times that disruptive students can learn most effectively in alternative settings and programs.

Summer Professional Development Institutes

If funding is available, the SPI will conduct a series of summer professional development institutes 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. If funding is available, SPI will conduct at least one institute in each of the nine educational service districts before the 1999-2000 school year. 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.

Grant Program

A grant program is created to help schools provide alternate settings and programs for disruptive students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The grants will support the implementation of plans to provide alternative settings and programs to meet the educational needs of students who are frequently and significantly disruptive in regular classroom settings. The funding may also be used for any professional development necessary to implement the plans. Any combination of schools, school districts, and consortia of schools or districts may apply for grant funds. Applicants must include a description of their plans for using the grant funds. The plans must include the use of research-based strategies that work effectively with disruptive students.

The program will be administered by SPI. Grants will be available for at least three years. When distributing funds for the program, the SPI will give a priority to applicants that either have the highest proportion of students who exhibit frequent and significant disruptive behaviors, or who have the highest proportion of disciplinary incidents. Disciplinary incidents include suspensions, expulsions, and classroom removals. The SPI will consult representatives of principals' organizations to determine which applicants will receive grants. Grant funding will not be available until July 1, 2000.

An emergency clause is attached.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 18, 1999.

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