

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2749

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to extended learning opportunities for struggling students.

Brief Description: Creating extended learning opportunities for struggling students.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Talcott, Haigh, Thomas, Stensen, Rockefeller, Eickmeyer, O'Brien, Lovick, Regala, Tokuda, Keiser, Edmonds, Conway, Van Luven, Wood, Kagi, Morris, Kenney, Ogden and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/27/00, 2/2/00 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Funding is provided for summer school programs designed to help struggling first grade through third grade students meet the state's academic standards.
- Funding will be allocated to school districts based on a formula that multiplies the number of students scoring in the lowest level of the 1999 fourth grade Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WSASL) by the number of full-time equivalent students enrolled in grades one through three.

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; Thomas and Wensman.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

The Commission on Student Learning presented a series of recommendations to the 1999 Legislature for a state educational accountability system. The commission recommended that the system include extended learning opportunities for students who have had or will have difficulty meeting the state's academic standards. The commission also recommended that the school districts review programs and practices that are effective with struggling students. The 1999 Legislature created an educational accountability system for the state. The findings section of the legislation states that the purpose of the system is to improve student learning and achievement of the state's academic standards, also called the essential academic learning requirements.

Washington has a number of programs designed to assist struggling students. One such program is the Learning Assistance Program, in operation for about 19 years. Another is the Reading Corps. The programs are not specifically designed to provide extended learning opportunities for students who have had or will have trouble meeting the state's standards in more than one subject. The state does not provide funding for summer school programs.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Superintendent for Public Instruction will provide money to school districts to fund summer school extended learning programs for struggling students who have completed grades one through three. The programs are intended to help the students meet the state standards in reading, writing, and mathematics on the fourth grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning.

School districts will decide how to select students for the program, using teacher referrals as part of that process. Students cannot be required to participate, but districts are directed to encourage struggling students and their parents to enroll the students into the summer programs. Schools on year round calendars may offer the programs during vacations and intercessions, however the program will not fund after school or Saturday school programs.

Program funds may be used for salaries for instructional staff, student transportation, and to support other services necessary for full-day programs. The districts must use program funds to supplement and not supplant funding used before May 1, 2000, to support extended learning programs for struggling students. One fourth of the instructional staff may be classified instructional staff.

The programs must offer students at least 20 days of instruction. Participating staff will work for at least five hours per instructional day, with at least four of those hours devoted to student instruction. The staff will be selected through a process that includes notice, written applications, and an objective selection process. Those

selected must be trained in effective strategies to help struggling students improve their skills in math, reading, and writing. The selection process is not subject to collective bargaining.

Funding will be allocated to school districts based on a formula that multiplies the number of students scoring in the lowest level of the 1999 fourth grade WSASL by the number of full-time equivalent students enrolled in grades one through three. The program is not part of the state's basic education program.

A null and void clause is attached.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: A full day of instruction is defined, the funding formula is clarified, the appropriation section is removed and replaced with a null and void clause, the program is not part of basic education, and the selection process for staff is revised.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on (date).

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: The state is requiring all its school children to meet high academic standards. All indicators tell us that some children will need additional time and assistance to meet those standards. A child who starts behind stays behind, so it is important to provide help for struggling students before they fall so far behind that they will never be able to catch up. Research shows that, over the long summer vacation, children, especially younger children, forget too many of the skills they learned the prior year. One of the best investments the state can make toward student achievement is funding extended learning programs for struggling students. The program proposed in this legislation will help struggling children and will help provide a bridge to the next school year so that, over the summer, students will retain more of the skills they learned the prior year.

(In support with concerns): Participants should be able to use the funding provided in this legislation to replace funding they are currently using for summer school, but the legislation prohibits this flexibility. The program should also permit school districts to use the funding for extended day and week programs during the school year as well as for summer school programs.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Quall, prime sponsor; Karen Davis, Washington Education Association; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association; Glyn Brice, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Donna Obermeyer, Special Ed Coalition; Judy Hartmann, Tacoma Public Schools; and Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

(In support with concerns) Ken Kanikeberg, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.