

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1462

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, April 1, 1999

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

Brief Description: Changing school accountability and assistance provisions.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by 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).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 3/24/99, 3/31/99, 4/1/99 [DPA, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Bauer, Brown, Goings, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Finkbeiner, Hochstatter, Swecker and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: *The Commission on Student Learning (CSL):* CSL consists of three members of the State Board of Education (SBE) 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. CSL expires on June 30, 1999. CSL must transfer EALRs, the completed assessments and the assessments in development to SPI before it expires.

Goals: In 1998, the Legislature required each school district and elementary school to establish a goal to increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed the reading standard on the fourth grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and establish annual increments to meet the goal.

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 by school and school district the fourth grade WASL results to schools, school districts and the Legislature, including posting the results on the SPI Internet site.

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. The bill draft contains the recommendations.

Summary of Amended Bill: Provisions for a statewide school accountability system are enacted.

The Commission of Academic Achievement (CAA): The Commission on Academic Achievement (CAA) is created to provide oversight of the accountability system. Membership is the SPI, one member of the SBE and seven members appointed by the Governor. The CAA may appoint staff and has rule-making authority. The duties of the CAA are to: (1) establish and revise statewide academic goals; (2) annually review the reporting system and recommend changes as necessary; (3) recommend to SPI which school districts require additional state-level assistance, recognition and intervention; (4) hear concerns about interventions; and (5) recommend changes to the accountability policy. There is an emergency clause for this section to take effect immediately.

Commission on Student Learning (CSL): The duties for the EALRs and the assessments become the duties of SPI.

Goals: The CAA may establish and revise statewide goals in additional content areas and grade levels.

Reporting: Each school district must annually report the district's progress toward meeting the reading goal 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 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, CAA must annually report to the legislative education committees on the progress that has been made in achieving the reading goal and on the

setting of other goals. CAA must annually review the reporting system and recommend improvements to SPI.

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. 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): The SLIGs statute is repealed.

Accountability Implementation funds(AIFs): To the extent funds are appropriated, SPI must allocate funds to school districts to provide time for school staff to develop and implement student learning improvement plans. The plans must be available to the public. Activities for expenditure of the AIFs are listed and must minimize the use of substitute teachers. The School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf are eligible to receive AIFs.

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 CAA.

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, CAA must evaluate elementary schools in which students are showing little or no improvement. CAA must evaluate middle and high schools three years after assessments are mandatory. CAA 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 CAA may recommend that SPI intervene in the school district. SPI may intervene and take appropriate corrective actions.

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.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The striking amendment changes the name, the membership, and the duties of the oversight commission. The overall midterm goal, the seventh grade reading goal, and the fourth and seventh grade math goals are taken out of statute. Six of the nine types of information added to the school report card are deleted. SPI must report the WASL using two methods. The certification process for obtaining and later reporting on the use of the Accountability Implementation Funds (AIFs) is deleted. Activities funded by the AIFs must minimize the use of substitute teachers. CISL's best practices areas, training areas, and reporting methods are expanded. One state coordinator is provided for the regional helping corp of school improvement specialists. The two-year

emergency targeted assistance grants were deleted. A SPI study of the fourth grade Math WASL and a study of the LAP program was deleted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except Sections 101, 501, and 603, which take effect immediately.

Testimony For: Accountability is the third and final component of education reform. The Legislature should continue the setting of goals which began last year. The name of the oversight commission should reflect student achievement, not just accountability. The commission needs to be balanced and have broad-based representation in order to have credibility. The commission should not be political. The commission needs to have adequate authority to define criteria and the implementation system but could still report to the Legislature and SPI would implement. Instead of the commission having rule-making authority, it should recommend statutory changes to the Legislature and rule changes to SPI and SBE. Accountability without assistance is meaningless. Meaningful accountability means that the state must invest more. Interventions and recognitions need to be well studied and meaningful. The accountability system needs to protect local control. The measures used need to be fair and appropriate. There should be consideration for the special needs populations. There are inconsistencies in the bill that need to be addressed. The additional reporting requirements on the school performance reports will not provide useful information. An accountability system for the complex enterprise of education needs to look at more than just the scores on three tests at three grade levels and should include, for example student drop-out rates.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO (with comments or concerns): Dr. Terry Bergeson, SPI; Gary Livingston, Spokane superintendent; Barbara Mertens, WASA; Steve Mullin, Washington Roundtable; Lynn Nixon, American Electronics Association; Gary King, WEA; Dwayne Slate, WSSDA; Jennifer Wallace, Governor's office; Barbara Casey, PTA; Joe Pope, AWSP; Ellen O'Brien Saunders, WTECB; Judy Hartmann, Tacoma School District; Larry Davis, SBE.