

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5756

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As of February 25, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to opportunity schools.

**Brief Description:** Creating the opportunity schools program.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe and Rasmussen; by request of Governor Locke.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 2/25/99.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Under current state law, the state allocates funds to school districts but does not mandate a specific use or spending pattern for the majority of the state funds received by the school districts. Each district determines how to allocate the state money to the local schools within the school district.

The school board establishes the district's educational program offerings and policies which must comply with state law and the rules adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and the State Board of Education unless the district seeks a waiver.

**Summary of Bill:** The opportunity school program is established. A majority of the school board may vote to become an opportunity district.

Each district that becomes an opportunity district must file a plan with SPI containing provisions for accountability, the role and composition of school-based councils, and a description of the district's budget and the district's plan for allocating funds to individual schools. The district may retain no more than 25 percent of the state allocation for district operations. At least 75 percent of the allocation to individual schools should be weighted by student need; however, the school has full discretion on allocating the resources regardless of how the district allocated the money to the school.

Each school that becomes an opportunity school must file a comprehensive school improvement plan with the school district addressing at least eight issues: (1) the alignment of the school budget with the school improvement plan; (2) the use of innovative strategies and proven methods for student learning, teaching and school management; (3) a comprehensive design for school functioning; (4) continuous professional development for teachers and staff; (5) measurable goals for student performance; (6) the involvement of parents and the community in school improvement activities; (7) a plan for evaluation; and (8) support on the improvement plan.

Opportunity schools are granted waivers from state law, except those relating to health and safety, civil rights, special education, collective bargaining, selected education reform provisions, norm-reference student assessments and selected basic education program and allocation statutes.

SPI must establish performance and financial accountability requirements for opportunity school districts and schools.

The program must be available to school districts beginning in the 1999-2000 school year and expires June 30, 2004. After three years of implementation, the Institute for Public Policy must study the effectiveness of opportunity schools in improving student achievement.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 23, 1999.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.