

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1074

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to student transportation allocation information.

Brief Description: Changing the timing for transmittal of certain student transportation allocation information.

Sponsors: Representatives Benson, McMorris and Talcott.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/24/01, 2/14/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

· Changing the date by which school districts must report to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) on the number of students that require transportation and the number of miles these students need to be transported.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Anderson, Republican Vice Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Cox, Ericksen, McDermott, Pearson, Rockefeller, Schindler, D. Schmidt and Schual-Berke.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By law, the state must fully fund certain costs associated with transporting children to and from the public schools. To and from school– is defined to include transportation to and from route stops and schools, transportation involved in interdistrict agreements, transportation to and from schools and learning centers that provide certain statutorily

required programs, and the transportation costs associated with special education services. Students who live closer to their schools than one mile are not eligible for state funded transportation unless they are in special education or in kindergarten through fifth grade. Extended day programs are specifically excluded from the definition of programs eligible for state transportation funding.

School districts must submit a annual transportation report to the OSPI during the month of October. By law, the report includes a count of the number of eligible students transported during the current school year, an estimate of miles driven to transport these students, and the number of miles driven the previous year. It also includes additional elements required by the OSPI. School districts must provide the reports in order to receive state transportation funds.

By rule, school districts must count the number students riding their buses and the number of miles driven during five consecutive days in the fall. The information gathered during this count will be included in the district's October report to the OSPI, and the district's state transportation funding will be based on this information. School districts may file a supplemental report and receive additional funding if the number of students increases ten percent or more after the initial count. The procedures that the districts must follow to file the supplemental report are described in rule.

Although a school district's transportation funding level is determined by the information in the October report, the district's funding levels are not determined until the middle of January, and it does not receive its transportation allocation until February.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The date by which school districts are required to submit their annual transportation reports to the OSPI is changed from October to November 15.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The date by which OSPI is required to notify school districts of their transportation funding levels is not extended from January 15 to January 30.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: For the purposes of receiving transportation funding, school districts must report on the number of students riding buses by the middle of October every year. While this date may work well for some districts, it doesn't work for districts in Eastern Washington. The number of students riding school buses begins to increase once the weather turns cold. It increases substantially, at times by 30 percent, when snow and ice cover the ground. The state is required by law to fully fund student transportation costs, but in reality, school districts must subsidize those costs due to state rules such as the reporting date.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Rep. Benson, prime sponsor; and Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.