

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1378

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to parental and community involvement grants.

Brief Description: Creating the parental and community involvement grant pilot program.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Cox, Keiser, Quall, McDermott, Talcott, Simpson, D. Schmidt, Schual-Berke, Lovick, Wood, O'Brien, Kenney, Conway and Jackley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/5/01, 2/26/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- A pilot grant program to promote parent and community involvement in schools is established.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Anderson, Republican Vice Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Cox, Ericksen, Keiser, McDermott, Pearson, Rockefeller, Santos, D. Schmidt and Schual-Berke.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Schindler.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

In 1993 the Legislature declared that improving student achievement will require parents to be primary partners in the education of their children, and to play a significantly greater role in decision making at the local school level. In 1997 the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) coordinated the current Unity Project based on a finding that the level of family and community involvement is a strong predictor of

student success or failure. In January 2001, the Washington Association of Principals reported to the House Education Committee that communication and partnerships with parents and community members was one of seven critical factors for promoting student learning in performance-based schools.

Summary of Bill:

A two-year pilot grant program is established to help parents, schools, and communities form partnerships to improve student learning and to strengthen the role of parents and the community in the educational process.

One hundred schools or districts are eligible to receive a maximum grant of \$8,000 per school year, and a total of \$16,000 over the grant period. Schools and districts are encouraged, but not required, to provide a local funding match of 30 percent. The match may be in the form of in-kind contributions from the school or district, or from private sources.

The schools or districts selected must represent a balance of characteristics, including, geographic location, student demographics, urban and rural locations, and district or school size. Priority will be given to elementary schools. Grants are limited to those schools and districts that do not have a paid coordinator for parent and community involvement or an existing program to coordinate parent and community involvement.

The OSPI will administer the program with assistance from an advisory committee that may include representatives of parents, and educational and community organizations. The application process will be simple, with the only requirement being a statement of commitment from parents, community members, and school and district representatives. Reporting requirements for participants will be as minimal as practicable.

By September 2003, the OSPI will report to the Governor and the Senate and House Education committees on recommendations for the expansion, continuation, modification, or elimination of the program. The legislation expires June 30, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Education reform is based on a three-legged stool of parents, students, and schools. Parent volunteer programs sometimes fail because of lack of coordination. A paid coordinator can make a big difference. The value of well-coordinated volunteers

is significant, especially at the elementary school level. One-on-one tutoring draws on many resources of the community and is the key to success for struggling students. Parents and the community must work together to increase student achievement. Students get positive messages from seeing parents and community participating in the schools. A flexible approach allows communities to identify and addresses their unique needs. Parent liaisons help families understand what is needed for children to be successful learners. Parental literacy and school involvement are keys to success for latino/a students. Non-English speaking parents need support in order to be supportive of their own students. Minority districts especially benefit by parent involvement opportunities. Parent and community partnerships go hand-in-hand with education reform. Quality pilot programs can provide new models for parent, school, and community partnerships.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Santos, prime sponsor; Debbie Cole, citizen; Jackie Sanders, North Thurston School District; Karen Johnson, Meadows Elementary School; Ricardo Sanchez, Latino Educational Achievement Program; Jean Carpenter, Washington State PTA; Linda Lamb, State Board of Education; Rainer Houser, Washington Association of School Principals; Joan Yoshitomi, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.