

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6456

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to authorizing the academic achievement and accountability commission to set performance improvement goals for certain disaggregated groups of students and dropout goals.

Brief Description: Authorizing the academic achievement and accountability commission to set performance improvement goals for certain disaggregated groups of students and dropout goals.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Finkbeiner, Kohl-Welles, Winsley and Keiser; by request of Governor Locke, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State School Directors Association, A+ Commission and State Board of Education.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/21/02, 2/26/02 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Permits the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) to adopt performance improvement goals for all students, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, and students from disproportionately underachieving racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Permits the A+ Commission to adopt goals for secondary school graduation rates and dropout rate reduction goals.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Haigh, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, McDermott, Rockefeller, Santos, Schindler, Schmidt and Upthegrove.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

In 1999 the Legislature gave the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) the authority to adopt, in rule, student performance improvement goals in reading, mathematics, writing, and science. Prior to the implementation of any new goal, the A+ Commission must present the goal to the Legislature for review and comment.

Summary of Bill:

Student performance improvement goals adopted by the A+ Commission must not conflict with the 2002 re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The goals may be established for all students, for economically disadvantaged students, limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, and students from racial and ethnic backgrounds that are disproportionately underachieving academically. The results of schools and districts that test fewer than 10 students in a grade level are not reported to protect the privacy of the students.

The A+ Commission may also establish school and school district goals addressing high school graduation rates and dropout reduction goals for students in grades 7-12.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: This legislation addresses the need to reduce and eliminate achievement gaps among different student groups. It also parallels the state's responsibilities under the new federal education law. Closing the gap cannot be allowed to result in higher dropout rates. Permitting the A+ Commission to adopt goals for graduation rates is a good way to help bring all students up to the state's standards. The underlying law contains safeguards since all goals must be provided to the Legislature before their implementation.

(Concerns) It is important that the goals adopted by the A+ Commission and any goals adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the new federal law be identical. Since the United States Department of Education has not yet adopted rules for the new federal law, perhaps the A+ Commission should wait to adopt any new goals of its own.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Jose Gaitan, Academic Achievement and Accountability

Commission; Laura Kohn, Governor's Office; Terry Byington, High Tech Trade Association; Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Steve Mullin, Washington Roundtable; Patty Martin, State Board of Education; Robert Butts and Andrew Griffin, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals.

(With concerns) Karen Davis, Washington Education Association.