
Education Committee

HB 1562

Brief Description: *Adopting recommendations of the academic achievement and accountability commission.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Talcott (co-prime sponsor), Quall (co-prime sponsor) and Keiser; by request of Governor Locke; Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission; State Board of Education.*

<p><i>Brief Summary of Bill</i></p> <p>.</p>

Hearing Date: *2/8/01*

Staff: *Susan Morrissey (786-7111).*

Background:

Accountability is the term used to describe the means by which the Legislature and members of the public can evaluate the effectiveness of the state's education system. An accountability system usually includes rewards for success and assistance and sanctions for lack of success. Until recently, the Legislature depended on a series of input- measures for accountability purposes. For example, schools have been accountable for the number of hours students sit in classrooms, the types of classes offered to students, and the number of hours teachers spend in classrooms. Beginning with the 2001 school year, some of those measures have been repealed.

With the passage of the ESHB 1209, the 1993 Education Reform Act, the state embarked on a new system to evaluate the effectiveness of the state's public education system. Under the new system, schools and school districts will be evaluated on the level of student learning that can be demonstrated by students in the school or district. The state uses a series of standardized tests or assessments for the evaluation. Students take nationally normed tests in the third, sixth, and ninth grades to see how their level of academic achievement compares to the achievement of students in other schools, school districts, and states. The nationally normed tests are considered to be tests of basic skills. Students also take criterion referenced tests in the fourth, seventh, and tenth grades to see whether they

have met the state's learning standard for students at that grade level. The criterion reference tests, also called the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), measures the students' achievement of the state's essential academic learning requirements.

The new accountability system will use these test results and other data on student learning to determine the success of schools and school districts.

The accountability system is still under development. The system requires schools and school districts to report to parents and the community on test results. The system also requires schools to begin raising the level of student achievement in certain subjects. In addition, the system assigns a variety of responsibilities to the A+ Commission. These include the adoption and modification of improvement goals in reading, writing, mathematics, and other subjects in which a WASL has been developed. The commission will also adopt criteria to identify successful schools and school districts, those in need of assistance, and those in which a significant number of students persistently fail to meet state standards. The commission will identify the scores that indicate how well students are performing on the WASL. Finally, in addition to its other duties, the commission will identify schools and districts in which state intervention is necessary and will describe a range of appropriate intervention strategies that might be used in those schools. The commission cannot intervene in a school or school district until the Legislature has authorized the intervention strategies that can be used in the system. Once the commission determines that intervention is necessary, the SPI will work with the school or school district to implement any intervention strategies identified by the commission for that particular school or district.

The legislation that created the A+ Commission included the basic skeleton of the state's accountability system. However, it deferred some decisions pending further study by the newly created commission. By September 5, 2000, the A+ Commission was required to report to the Legislature with specific recommendations on four elements of the system. The commission was required to recommend rewards for successful schools and school districts and any additional assistance measures needed by students and schools to raise student achievement. The commission was also directed to recommend a series of increasingly intensive state intervention strategies. Finally, the commission was required to advise the Legislature on any statutory changes needed by the SPI to implement the intervention strategies directed by the commission and authorized by the Legislature. The commission provided its report to the Legislature in November of 2000. HB 1562 contains the commission's recommendations.

Summary of Bill:

Section 1 "Intent"

Describes the purpose of accountability as the improvement of student learning so all students meet the essential academic learning requirements and the four state learning goals. Distinguishes among the three stages of assistance and intervention.

Section 2 "Commission powers and duties"

Amends the commission's current powers and duties to permit it to set goals for dropout

rates and disproportionate improvement goals for groups of struggling students. Allows the commission to direct a district to accept focused assistance and authorizes it to direct and the SPI to implement state intervention strategies

Section 3 “ Annual analysis of assessment results

Requires the commission, with the assistance of the SPI, to annually analyze results on required criterion-referenced and norm-references assessments. Directs the commission to prioritize schools with highest need for focused assistance and to determine the number of schools eligible for assistance by Sept. 15 each year. Authorizes the commission to direct a district to accept focused assistance under certain conditions.

Section 4 “ Performance Agreements

Authorizes the SPI to negotiate performance agreements with districts that have a school the commission deems eligible for focused assistance. Permits the SPI to develop a performance agreement in consultation with a district if the district is required to accept focused assistance. Requires commission approval of performance agreements. Defines performance agreements as two-year renewable contracts between the SPI and the district board on behalf of an eligible school. Clarifies timing and required components for focused assistance agreements.

Section 5 “ Focused Assistance

Limits focused assistance to cost-effective strategies for improving student learning or promising strategies that are part of a rigorous, ongoing evaluation. Describes 12 options and actions that may be provided, among others, to the district and the SPI for inclusion in an agreement. Lists examples of such options including curriculum changes, extended learning, time for staff collaboration, materials, within-district public school choice, personnel changes, waivers from state laws, local policies and agreements, and in egregious situations closing and reconstituting a school.

Section 6 “ Performance agreement implementation analyzed

Requires analysis of the results of each performance agreement after one year and again after the second year of focused assistance. Requires an analysis of student performance after two years of focused assistance. Requires the commission or its designee to conduct a more in-depth evaluation, using multiple sources of information if it determines the school and district are not making sufficient progress.

Section 7 “ Intervention strategies authorized

Authorizes the SPI to intervene in a school at the request of the commission if the commission deems such intervention is warranted as a result of the evaluation in section six. Clarifies that interventions may include any and all actions deemed by the commission and the SPI to improve student learning. Permits interventions to include any provision that may be in a performance agreement plus additional actions. Describes additional actions as including the development by the SPI of a performance improvement plan;

withholding of nonbasic education state funds; reconstituting personnel; removing schools from the jurisdiction of a district; appointing a trustee to administer a district; abolishing or restructuring a district; and authorizing student transfers to other public schools in the same or an adjacent district if space is available and providing that in such cases free transportation may be offered only if the state fully funds the cost and if the SPI determines free transportation is appropriate in individual cases.

Section 8 “ the SPI powers

Amends current law to give SPI the authority to develop a performance agreement for a district required to accept focused assistance and to implement state interventions.

Section 9 “ Withholding funds

Amends current law allowing the SPI to withhold school district funds to permit withholding of nonbasic education state funds if that action is deemed necessary during an intervention.

Section 10 “ School board power to hire superintendent

Modifies the authority of school boards to employ superintendents to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the legislation.

Section 11 “ District superintendents’ duties

Modifies the statutory duties to a superintendent to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 12 “ Employment of building administrators

Modifies employment laws on the duties and qualifications of principals and vice principals to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 13 “ Hiring and discharge of employees

Modifies the law on school staff employment and benefits to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 14 “ Conditions and contracts of employment, nonrenewal

Modifies the law on certificated staff employment to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill. Provides a mechanism for employees whose contracts are not renewed through accountability provisions to request reconsideration of the decision.

Section 15 “ Conditions of employment, nonrenewal of provisional employees

Modifies the law outlining procedures for nonrenewal of an employment contract for a

provisional employee to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 16 -- Conditions and contracts of employment, transfer of administrators

Modifies the law that governs the transfer of administrative staff to a subordinate certificated position to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 17 “ Common schools definition

Modifies the common school definition to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 18 “ Powers of school districts

Modifies the law governing the powers of school to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 19 “ Powers of school district boards of directors

Modifies the discretionary power of school district boards of directors to determine and adopt policies to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 20 “ School districts contracting authority

Modifies the authority of school districts boards of directors to contract with other entities to carry out its powers and duties to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 21 “ Governance structure

Modifies the law on the governance structure to include the commission and to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 22 “ School district boundaries

Clarifies that current law on boundary changes and related matters is not affected by this bill.

Section 23 “ Definitions

Amends current law on definitions in the sections relating to boundary changes and related matters to make clear that state intervention strategies authorized under this bill do not affect this area of law.

Section 24 “ Admission of pupils tuition free

Makes clear this act does not affect current law on admission of resident school-age persons tuition free.

Section 25 “ Public school choice

Modifies laws governing public school choice transfers to nonresident school districts to assure consistency with the accountability provisions of the bill.

Section 26 “ Intradistrict enrollment

Modifies the law requiring districts to adopt policies allowing intradistrict enrollment options to provide that in any conflict between such a policy and this act, the act shall supersede the policy.

Section 27 “ Classified employee collective bargaining

Adds a new section to the current chapter of law related to collective bargaining for certain categories of public employees, including classified school district employees, providing that in the event of a conflict between this act and any contracts and agreements approved by school districts after the effective date of the act, the act shall supersede the contract or agreement.

Section 28 “ Certificated employee collective bargaining

Adds a new section to the current chapter of law related to collective bargaining for certificated employees of school districts, providing that in the event of a conflict between this act and any contracts and agreements approved by school districts after the effective date of the act, the act shall supersede the contract or agreement.

Section 29 “ Conflicting statutes

Amends a section of law related to collective bargaining for certificated employees of school districts to provide that this act shall supersede any provision of chapter 41.59 in the event of a conflict.

Section 30 “ Repeal

Repeals the law requiring the commission to submit by September 5, 2000 the accountability system recommendations.

Section 31 “ Reading, Math goals

Repeals the law containing the 4th grade reading and 4th and 7th grade math improvement goals. Section 31 takes effect September 1, 2001.

Section 32 “ Repeals goals, effective date

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2001.

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