

Education Committee

HB 1786

Brief Description: *Providing grants to districts to foster education reform and improve student achievement.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Haigh, Talcott, Rockefeller, Schual-Berke, Keiser, Conway, Edmonds, Edwards, Kenney and O'Brien; by request of Governor Locke; Superintendent of Public Instruction.*

Brief Summary of Bill

Hearing Date: *2/14/01*

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

Background:

Until recently, the legislature depended on a series of input- measures to evaluate the performance of public schools. These measures included items such as the number of hours students sit in classrooms, the types of classes offered to students, and the number of hours teachers spend in classrooms.

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 reform act included a finding that the public school system should provide more flexibility for school boards and educators to determine how instruction is provided to students.

Beginning with the 2001 school year, as part of the state's education reform efforts, a few of input measures that were once in law have been modified or repealed.

The requirement that school districts provide instruction for a specified number of hours

was modified to provide additional flexibility to districts. The modification removed the former grade level and subject area requirements and replaced them with an average of 1000 hours of instruction per year in grades one through twelve. Kindergarten students must receive at least 450 hours of annual instruction.

The requirement that a full time equivalent teacher spend an average of 25 hours a week indirect classroom contact was repealed.

The requirement that schools conduct a self-study every seven years was also repealed. The State Board of Education may waive some laws and rules at the request of a school district. During the 1999-00 school year, the board granted four waivers of state program hour/contact time requirements and 39 waivers to the definition of a school day. The board also granted 37 district wide and 32 individual school waivers to the 180 day school year requirement.

Summary of Bill:

Findings

It is found that the governance of the common school system must be analyzed in its entirety to ascertain whether current education laws serve children or the system. To that end, most education laws except those that deal with accountability will be repealed on September 1, 2004. Before the laws are repealed, a new school code will be enacted to take effect at the beginning of the 2004-05 school year. In order to decide which laws to retain, school districts must be given an opportunity to innovate in the operation and management of schools. The districts must also be given the ability to redesign or modify their teacher compensation systems.

Flexibility Grant Program

A statewide competitive grant program is created to provide selected schools and districts with regulatory flexibility. Participants will be exempted from most state laws and rules in exchange for entering performance contracts that focus on student achievement. Participating districts must enter performance contracts with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and local performance contracts with the schools within their districts. Schools that meet the terms of their contracts may continue to operate under the new system. Schools that meet or exceed their goals for student achievement will receive building based financial rewards.

Participating schools and districts must comply with state and federal health, safety, civil rights, and background check laws. They must also comply with some state laws and rules on financial and auditing requirements. Their students must take the required nationally normed standardized tests and the Washington assessment of student learning. Participants may hire noncertificated teachers of unusual competence and may ask permission to pool most state funds, except special education revenues. In addition, participants will be exempt from certain requirements that are normally written into the state budget.

Alternative Compensation System Grant Program

A statewide competitive grant program is created to provide selected schools and districts with help in developing alternative compensation systems for teachers. The systems will focus on career ladder models designed to attract, support, and retain the best teachers. Participants must complete their system designs by July 1, 2003.

Program Logistics

Both grant programs will be administered by OSPI in partnership with the governor. School districts that wish to participate in one or both programs will submit applications to OSPI for planning grants to help the districts develop their applications for the programs. Grants will be awarded based on the need and on the level of interest and commitment of teachers, parents, staff, local bargaining units, principals, and others. Priority will be given to districts interested in applying for both programs.

OSPI will contract with a technical assistance team of experts. The team will help plan a statewide student achievement conference for recipients of the planning grants. The team will also help planning grant recipients write their grant applications and will help districts in the implementation phase of their programs. The components of the grant applications are described. Participants must participate in an evaluation process. The governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) will select a panel to review and evaluate the grant applications for both programs. The panel will recommend districts for grant awards.

School Code Task Force

The governor and SPI will convene a task force of six to eight people to coordinate the process of rewriting the common school laws. The two officials will consult the legislature before selecting members of the task force. Members of the task force will represent teachers, local bargaining units, staff, school administrators, parents, school directors, and the business community. The task force will consider information from participants of the two grant programs. Staff from the governor's office, OSPI, and the legislature will assist the task force. The task force will prepare recommendations and proposed legislation for the 2004 legislative session.

These requirements expire on September 1, 2004.

Code Expirations

The following chapters of school law are repealed on September 1, 2004.

- 28A.150 - General provisions including most basic education laws*
- 28A.155 - Special education*
- 28A.160 - Student transportation*
- 28A.165 - Learning assistance program*
- 28A.175 - Dropout prevention and retrieval program*

28A.180 - Transitional Bilingual Instruction program
28A.185 - Highly capable students
28A.190 - Residential education programs
28A.193 - Education programs for juvenile inmates
28A.195 - Private schools
28A.200 - Home-based instruction
28A.205 - Education centers
28A.210 - Health - screening and requirements
28A.215 - Early childhood, preschools, and before and after school care
28A.220 - Traffic safety
28A.225 - Compulsory school attendance and admission
28A.230 - Compulsory course work and activities
28A.235 - Food service
28A.300 - SPI
28A.305 - State Board of Education
28A.310 - Educational service districts
28A.315 - The organization and reorganization of school districts
28A.320 - Provisions applicable to all districts
28A.323 - Joint school districts
28A.325 - Associated student bodies
28A.330 - Provisions applicable to school districts
28A.340 - Small high school cooperative projects
28A.343 - School director districts
28A.345 - Washington State School Directors' Association
28A.350 - School district warrants
28A.400 - Employees
28A.405 - Certificated employees
28A.410 - Certification
28A.415 - Institutes, workshops, and training
28A.500 - Local effort assistance
28A.505 - School district budgets
28A.510 - Apportionment
28A.515 - Common school construction fund
28A.520 - Forest reserve funds distribution
28A.525 - Bond issues
28A.530 - District bonds for land, buildings, and equipment
28A.535 - Validating indebtedness
28A.540 - Capital fund aid by nonhigh districts
28A.545 - Payment to high school districts
28A.600 - Students
28A.605 - Parent access
28A.620 - Community education programs
28A.623 - Meal programs
28A.625 - Award programs
28A.630 - Temporary provisions
28A.635 - Offenses relating to school property and personnel
28A.640 - Sexual equity
28A.645 - Appeals

28A.650 - Education technology
28A.690 - Agreement on qualifications of personnel
28A.900 - Construction

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on February 9, 2001.*

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