

Education Committee

HB 2067

Brief Description: *Creating a small personalized schools pilot project.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Quall, Talcott, Haigh, Anderson, Hunt and Keiser.*

Hearing Date: *2/22/01*

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

Background:

There is a growing body of research that describes the positive effects that small schools have on student performance, school climate, professional collegiality, and parent satisfaction. A 2000 study by Hawley and Bickel studied 13,600 schools in four states, Georgia, Montana, Ohio, and Texas. The study found that small schools are effective in combating the negative effects of poverty on student achievement. In those schools, there was also a narrower achievement gap between students from higher and lower socio-economic circumstances.

Summary of Bill:

A personalized schools research and development program is created to study the extent to which personalized schools can result in increased academic and personal achievement in public schools. The program will measure academic achievement using the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. The program will measure personal achievement using retention rates; graduation rates; student behavior; student, parent, and teacher satisfaction; and other data. The legislature intends for the program to operate for five complete school years. The legislature also intends for the program to include an evaluation of personalized schools and to publish and distribute the results of the program's research and findings.

Personalized schools are defined as schools that meet the following criteria:

•Student enrollments of 275 or fewer students in elementary school and 440 or fewer students in secondary schools;

•Teachers work with every student assigned to the teacher's classroom for a minimum of two consecutive years;

•The schools develop and implement a plan for high levels of parent involvement in supporting their children's learning and helping to govern the school;

•The schools have a governance plan that involves an administrator, teachers, parents, community members, and if a secondary school, students; and

•The schools develop and implement a philosophy and mission that personalizes learning and the academic and personal success of each student.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) will administer the program, and provide grants, on a competitive basis, to school districts that wish to participate. The application and selection process is described. Grant applications must be received by November 1, 2001. Grants must be awarded by January 15, 2002.

The start up grant will be \$35,000 per school. Up to \$15,000 may be used for facilities. The remainder of the start up grant must be expended for teaching and learning, with a focus on professional development. Unless it is necessary for professional development, the funding may not be used to purchase material or curricula.

Participating schools will receive \$25,000 for the first year of operation, \$15,000 for the second year, and \$8,000 for the third year of operation.

The SPI will develop a system to assess the effectiveness of the program. The SPI will also designate a staff person to manage the assessment activities, provide technical assistance to participating schools, and organize an annual institute for participants. Finally, the SPI will analyze the results of the program and report its findings to the legislature and public annually.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on February 21, 2001.*

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