
Education Committee

HB 2615

Brief Description: Adopting the disabilities awareness act.

Sponsors: Representatives Cody, Dickerson, McIntire, Rockefeller, Santos, Lysen, Chase, Schual-Berke, Conway, Kenney, Darneille, Jackley and Simpson.

Hearing Date: 2/5/02

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

Under state and federal law, students with disabilities who are between the ages of three and 21 are entitled to a free and appropriate public education. Under the laws, students with disabilities are permitted to enroll in public schools and to receive, at no cost, instruction and services designed to meet the students' unique needs and abilities. The special services may include physical and occupational therapy and other types of developmental, corrective, and supportive services. The instruction and services provided to students as a result of their disabilities is generally called special education. Between 12 and 13 percent of Washington's public school students are enrolled in special education programs.

By law, all public school teachers must stress the importance of the cultivation of manners and the worth of kindness to all living creatures and the land (RCW 28A.230.020).

Summary of Bill:

Each elementary school will adopt a disabilities awareness program. The program must cover information on a list of eleven specific disabilities that fall under the categories of mental retardation, hearing impairments, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, and skin conditions. The program will include an etiquette section that contains information about how to address people with disabilities, common courtesies, and conversational skills.

With the exception of students with disabilities, all students must attend the program at least once by the time they reach the third grade. Students with disabilities are not required to take the program.

The legislation takes effect on August 1, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: 2/4/02.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2003.