SENATE BILL REPORT SB 5003

As of January 22, 2001

Title: An act relating to state board of education membership.

Brief Description: Providing for citizen election of members of the state board of education and increasing the number of board members to two per congressional district.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Finkbeiner and Swecker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 1/25/01.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Forty-eight states in the United States have a State Board of Education (SBE). The SBE members are appointed by the governor in 30 states; are elected by the citizenry in 10 states; and are appointed by the legislature in three states. The SBE membership is some combination of appointments and citizen elections in four states. Washington is the only state where the majority of the SBE members are elected by the local school directors.

In Washington, one SBE member is elected by the local school directors within each of the state's nine congressional districts. Each school director's vote is weighted according to the number of enrolled students in the director's school district.

Other members of the SBE include a private school representative, who is elected by the members of the boards of directors of approved private schools in the state, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Both of these members have limited voting authority.

The SBE also has three nonvoting members: the Governor or the Governor's designee, and two high school students annually appointed by the Washington State Association of Student Councils.

The responsibilities of the State Board of Education include establishing policies and standards for the training and certification of educators, determining minimum high school graduation requirements (including when the Certificate of Mastery becomes a graduation requirement), voluntary accreditation of public schools, approval of private schools, monitoring basic

education compliance, allocating school construction funds, and assisting with school district boundaries decisions.

Summary of Bill: The size of the SBE is increased and the composition and method of electing the SBE is changed. The SBE is comprised of two nonpartisan representatives from each of the congressional districts, except districts at large, who are elected by the voters within the congressional district at a general election. Provisions for the first transitional election and for filling vacancies are provided.

The membership of the SBE, the Governor, and the high school students are unaffected.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2001.

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