

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5625

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, February 27, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to academic achievement and accountability commission accountability system recommendations.

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

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe, Finkbeiner, Carlson and Kohl-Welles; by request of Governor Locke; Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission and State Board of Education.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 2/8/01, 2/27/01 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5625 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner, Johnson, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Rasmussen and Regala.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** In 1999, the Legislature created the Academic Achievement Accountability Commission to develop and provide oversight of an educational accountability system. Senate Bill 5625 contains the recommendations of the commission submitted in November 2000.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** A focused assistance process is provided. Each year the Academic Achievement Accountability Commission, with the assistance of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), analyzes the statewide criterion- and norm-referenced assessment results, using criteria adopted by the commission, to determine which schools and school districts are eligible for recognition, focused assistance, or intervention. The commission may adopt specified improvement goals in addition to the current academic performance improvement goals.

**Recognition:** The provisions requiring the commission to recommend recognition of schools and school districts for student achievement and improvements in student achievement are unchanged.

**Focused assistance:** Subject to available funding, the commission annually determines the number of schools eligible for focused assistance. The commission notifies the school's district that the school is eligible. The school district may then request the focused assistance by notifying the SPI. The SPI and the commission conducts a second-level of analysis using

local assessment and program data provided by the district. The SPI negotiates a voluntary two-year renewable performance agreement with the school district, subject to approval by the commission. The components of the agreement are specified and include a needs assessment, measurable benchmarks and timelines for the state, school district and the school.

The commission is given the authority to adopt criteria to identify schools that may be directed to accept focused assistance. If a school district is eligible but declines focused assistance, then the commission must analyze the school's assessment results the following year. After September 15, 2002, if the commission determines that student progress is not sufficient, then the commission may direct the school district to accept focused assistance under the terms of a performance agreement. The SPI develops the agreement in consultation with the school district, subject to approval by the commission. The components of the agreement are the same as the voluntary performance agreement.

A list of options that could be provided as voluntary or directed focused assistance is provided. Additional funding is an option and may be provided under the terms of the performance agreement, if funds are available, and if the SPI and the commission find that the district is currently spending its funds effectively and that additional funds are necessary.

The commission annually analyzes the implementation of performance agreements. If the analysis shows that the district is not making sufficient progress on the benchmarks then the commission conducts an in-depth evaluation using multiple sources of information. Based on the results of the in-depth evaluation, a decision is made by the commission regarding whether or not more intensive intervention strategies are needed.

Improvement goals: The commission may adopt additional goals addressing dropout rates and goals designed to accelerate the achievement of students who are disproportionately underachieving academically. The current academic performance improvement goals are repealed as of September 1, 2001.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The intent section is changed. The sections of the bill addressing intervention are removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. Section 31 of this act takes effect on September 1, 2001.

**Testimony For:** Goal setting and a focus on continuous improving is working to help school districts to achieve improvement. Accountability is the next important step to be taken. The focus of the bill is the targeted assistance for low-performing schools that are not showing signs of improvement. The ITBS and WASL scores are a red flag for the commission to take a closer look at what is really happening in a school. Multiple indicators will be used to do that. The school district is integrally involved in developing the plan to improve student learning. To accomplish student improvement, the SPI and the district need to be empowered

to take proven, cost-effective actions that will improve student achievement, with resources and checkpoints along the way.

**Testimony Against:** Achievement is improving not because of a law but because of the educators who are working with the students. Accountability should focus on enabling success, not on punishments. The use of multiple indicators occurs too late in the process. This is a costly endeavor and is there enough money to do this correctly? Financial resources should be dedicated to provide focused assistance for all schools in need, not just some. Oppose the ability to waive a collective bargaining agreement. If a waiver is provided, it should be with the agreement of the employees involved. The SPI is a constitutionally elected official and should not be subservient to an appointed commission. No one wants to abolish a school district but if it comes to that, then the Legislature should be the entity to do so, not the commission. This bill takes away local control.

**Testified:** PRO: Lynn Nixon, Steve Mullin, Agilent Technologies and AEA; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Board; Gary Kipp, Association of Washington School Principals; Kristin Bunce, Governor's Office; Larry Davis, State Board of Education; Dwayne Slate, WSSDA (concerns); Barbara Mertons, WASA (concerns); Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition (concerns); CON: Lisa Bond, Washington State PTA; Karen Davis, WEA; Dan Wilson, Edmonds teacher; Doug Nelson, PSE; Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public Instruction (neutral); Patrick Patrick, Jose Gaitan, David Fisher, Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (neutral).