

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 6456

As Passed Senate, February 15, 2002

Title: An act relating to authorizing the academic achievement and accountability commission to set performance improvement goals for certain disaggregated groups of students and dropout goals.

Brief Description: Authorizing the academic achievement and accountability commission to set performance improvement goals for certain disaggregated groups of students and dropout goals.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Finkbeiner, Kohl-Welles, Winsley and Keiser; by request of Governor Locke, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State School Directors Association, A+ Commission and State Board of Education.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 1/28/02, 1/30/02 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/15/02, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 1999, the Legislature gave the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission the authority to adopt, in rule, student performance improvement goals in reading, mathematics, writing and science. Prior to implementing any new goal, the Commission must present the goal to the Legislature for review and comment.

Summary of Bill: Student performance improvement goals adopted by the commission must not conflict with the 2002 re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The goals may be established for all students, for economically disadvantaged students, limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, and students from racial and ethnic backgrounds that are disproportionately underachieving academically. The results of schools and districts that test fewer than ten students in a grade level are not reported to protect the privacy of the students.

The commission may also establish school and school district goals addressing high school graduation rates and dropout reduction goals for students in grades seven through 12.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Education reform was intended to raise the achievement of all students but progress has not been uniform. These goals are necessary to raise the performance of students that have historically been left behind. The visibility of these goals will help motivate improvement in meeting the standards, closing the achievement gap and lowering the dropout rate. This is a modest effort since there are no consequences under the bill for meeting or not meeting the goals. Remember that the Legislature gets to review these goals prior to implementation. In addition to the student scores on academic assessments, it makes sense that dropout rates be included as another accountability measure. Could the dropout rate be stated in the positive rather than the negative?

Pro with concerns: There is concern that the goals will be different for compliance with the new federal law. Also, it appears there may be a conflict because SPI is required by the federal law to set the goals but this bill gives the authority to the Commission. There is a fear that the dropout goals will be used by some people, inappropriately, to compare school districts.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Terry Byington, AEA; Larry Davis, SBE; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Terry Bergeson, OSPI; Leana D. Lamb, Commission of Hispanic Affairs; Jose Gaitan, AT Commission; Rainer Houser, AWSP; Steven Mullin WA Roundtable; Kirstin Bunce; Gov. Locke's Office; Karen Davis, WEA (pro w/concerns).