

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2679

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to school directors' associations.

Brief Description: Providing for school directors' associations.

Sponsors: Representatives Tom, Fromhold, McMorris, Jarrett, Hunter, Talcott and Haigh.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/26/04, 2/5/04 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permitting school districts to join either the Washington State School Directors Association or another state association that will provide the same services.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunter, McMahan and Rockefeller.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Anderson, Cox, Haigh and Santos.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By law, school boards must be members of, and pay dues to, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA). The association is a state agency but all state funding for the agency is provided through the members' dues. The association is required to provide the following services for its members:

- Coordinating policies, control, and management of school districts;
- Conducting studies and providing information on ways to increase administrative efficiencies;

- Purchasing liability insurance for school directors;
 - Providing advice and assistance to school boards; and
 - Upon request, providing specialized services, research, and consultation in particular problem areas if the services are unavailable from other specific entities.
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Summary of Bill:

School districts have the option to join either the WSSDA or another state association that will provide the same services. The alternative state association must, at a minimum, provide the following services for its members:

- Coordinating policies, control, and management of school districts;
- Conducting studies and providing information on ways to increase administrative efficiencies;
- Purchasing liability insurance for school directors;
- Providing advice and assistance to school boards; and
- Upon request, providing specialized services, research, and consultation in particular problem areas if the services are unavailable from other specific entities.

Only the members of WSSDA are required to pay dues to the association.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The WSSDA is a wonderful organization that works well for most of the school boards in the state. However, its voting structure gives small districts a disproportionate voice in the decisions of the organization. For example, four districts with a total of 46 students between them have the same voting power as the Seattle district with over 46,000 students. In spite of that voting disparity, large districts pay dues based on the number of enrolled students. The organization refuses to align its dues with its voting structure. This bill will send the organization a message that it needs to consider alignment of the two or risk losing some of the school districts that serve large numbers of students.

Testimony Against: The WSSDA serves the needs of all the state's school districts through its efforts at collaboration, coordination, and communication. It became a state agency in 1947 in order to better serve the collective interests of school board members. Through that decision, the organization serving school boards gave up its independence in

favor of universal dues. Through its weighted voting formula, large districts have more votes than smaller districts, however members seldom call for a weighted vote because the process followed by the organization generally leads to compromise.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Tom, prime sponsor; and Alton McDonald, National Action Network.

(Opposed) Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors Association; and Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.