
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 1971

Brief Description: Establishing a deaf education task force.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Kagi, Pettigrew, Miloscia, Fromhold, Darneille, Shabro, Orcutt, Bailey, Schual-Berke and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a Deaf Education Task Force to examine the role of the Washington School for the Deaf in the education and training of hearing impaired children in the state.

Hearing Date: 2/24/03

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

The Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) is a state agency that serves deaf and hard-of-hearing children 3 through 21 years of age. The WSD provides academic and after-school programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing children living in the state at no cost to their parents or local school districts. The WSD's after-school program includes a residential component for students, from 3 through 18 years of age, who do not live within commuting distance of the agency.

The Superintendent of the WSD (Superintendent) is responsible for the supervision and management of the WSD. In addition, the Superintendent is required to:

- Monitor the location and educational placement of each student reported to the Superintendent by the educational service district superintendents in the state;
- Provide information about educational programs, instructional techniques, materials, equipment, and resources available to students with hearing impairments to the parent or guardian of a student with hearing impairment and the appropriate educational service district superintendent and school district superintendent; and
- Serve as a consultant to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, provide instructional leadership, and assist school districts in improving their instructional programs for students with hearing impairments.

Summary of Bill:

A Deaf Education Task Force (Task Force) is established. The focus of the Task Force must be an examination of the role of the WSD in the education and training of hearing impaired children in the state.

The membership of the Task Force must include the following: parents of hearing impaired children; hearing impaired adults; representatives of organizations that advocate for hearing impaired individuals; researchers on hearing impairment; individuals specializing in the education of hearing impaired individuals; and representatives of local school districts. The Task Force must consist of 15 members, 11 of whom will be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Board of Trustees of the WSD and four of whom will be members of the Legislature.

The Task Force is required to develop a strategic plan for the WSD. The strategic plan must include, at a minimum, the following:

- The appropriate service delivery model for serving hearing impaired children throughout the state;
- The role of the WSD in the development of quality services for hearing impaired children throughout the state;
- The role of the WSD in providing direct and indirect services to hearing impaired children both on campus and in the children's local communities; and
- The role of the WSD in relation to local school districts and other partners throughout the state.

The Task Force is required to report to the Governor and the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature no later than December 1, 2004. The Task Force expires on January 1, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 18, 2003.

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