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**Education Committee**

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**HB 3137**

**Brief Description:** Providing for a basic education.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Jarrett, Hunter, Tom, Lantz, Hankins and Linville.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Revises the definition of basic education to include the ability to attend a public school in which at least 90 percent of students make one year's worth of academic gain for each year in school, beginning September 1, 2006.

**Hearing Date:** 2/4/04

**Staff:** Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

**Background:**

The state constitution establishes the education of all children as the paramount duty of the state, and requires the Legislature to provide for a system of public schools. The constitution is the foundation upon which three school funding decisions made in the 1970s and 80s rested. Those decisions, coupled with subsequent state laws and court decisions, have helped shape the budget formulas used to determine the state support for the public education. In order to meet its paramount duty, the Legislature dedicates almost one-half of the state's general fund monies to support the education of children in the public schools.

The funding system begins with state-supervised school district budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting practices. State resources, supplemented by local and federal monies, are distributed through funding formulas to equalize educational opportunities throughout the state. Basic education and categorical programs are state supported through these formulas. State resources include state general fund revenue, other state revenues, state property taxes, and timber excise taxes.

Every few years, the Legislature revisits various aspects of school funding. The 1998 Legislature directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to study the financing system for the public schools. The study included a review of school district revenue and expenditure practices, resource allocations within selected districts, and available data sources. The study also addressed class size and personnel deployment issues. It was presented to the Legislature in 1999.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Legislature finds that all students need an opportunity to meet the state's academic standards and gain the knowledge and skill required to be successful citizens. The legislature intends to take the next step toward education reform by giving all students an opportunity to make one year's worth of academic growth for each year the students are enrolled in Washington's schools.

Beginning September 1, 2006, basic education includes the opportunity to attend a school in which at least 90 percent of the students achieve one year's academic gain for each year the students are enrolled in the state's public schools. The gain will be measured by the results of the third through eighth grade and high school Washington Assessments of Student Learning in reading and mathematics.

Beginning September 1, 2006, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) will report annually to school districts with the academic gain of individual students. The report will include the percentage of assessed students who achieved at the following levels:

- 110 percent of the standard
- 80 percent of the standard

By October 5, 2005, the SPI will report to the Governor and the Legislative Education Committees on any laws that need revision to give school districts the tools and flexibility to provide students with a basic education that allows the students to make one year's worth of academic gain during each school year.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 29, 2004.

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