

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3028

As Passed House:
February 9, 2006

Title: An act relating to classified school employees.

Brief Description: Requiring that a review of classified school employee funding be considered in the Washington Learns study.

Sponsors: By Representatives P. Sullivan, Cox, Quall, Hunt, Buri, Pearson, Ormsby, Fromhold, Anderson, Chase, Kessler, Lantz, Simpson, Sells, Appleton, Talcott, Green, Conway, Rodne, Woods, Morrell, Kilmer, B. Sullivan, Santos, Hasegawa, Kenney and Hudgins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/30/06, 2/1/06 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/9/06, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs that the funding review by the Washington Learns Steering Committee include a thorough review of funding for classified school employees.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Santos, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

There are more than 38,000 full-time equivalent classified (e.g., non-certificated) employees in public schools who are employed as instructional aides, bus drivers, custodians, food service workers, computer technicians, and business and administration staff. State funds for classified employees are allocated to school districts based on a ratio of classified staff per full-time equivalent student and an average salary for each school district. The average salary was calculated in the 1980s and has been increased through cost-of-living adjustments since that time. Unlike for certificated employees, there is no statewide salary schedule or minimum

staffing ratio. Actual salaries and numbers of classified employees are determined entirely at the local level.

Legislation enacted in 2005 created a comprehensive education and finance study covering early learning, K-12, and higher education (Washington Learns). Washington Learns is comprised of a steering committee chaired by the Governor and advisory committees for each education sector. The Washington Learns first interim report was presented in November of 2005. A second interim report is due in June of 2006, with a final report due in November of 2006.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature finds that classified school employees are an integral part of the K-12 school system. The Legislature believes the contribution of classified school employees should be enhanced to help all students succeed in meeting state learning standards. The Legislature further finds that the K-12 funding formula for the allocation of classified school employees has remained unchanged, despite significant changes in the delivery of services and the establishment of increased expectations for students.

The Legislature directs that the funding review by the Washington Learns Steering Committee include a thorough review of funding for classified school employees and that the report include findings and recommendations on how classified school employees can enhance students' abilities to meet state learning standards.

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: We need to acknowledge the significant impact of our classified school employees. They help our children get to school safely, ensure the school is a clean learning environment, provide security, and offer technical assistance. The bill simply directs the Washington Learns Steering Committee to review state funding of classified employees. There are many instances of high quality interaction and relationships between students and classified employees. Yet these employees have the lowest salaries. Previous discussions by the Washington Learns contractor have not mentioned classified employees. This is an important study, and these employees should not be overlooked. The role of para-educators has dramatically changed under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, and issues surrounding the impact of the federal law should also be examined.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative P. Sullivan, prime sponsor; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, American Federation of Teachers-Washington; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Tom Lopp, Washington State Public School Employees; and Ken Kanikeberg, Washington State Public School Employees.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.