
Education Committee

HB 3127

Brief Description: Regarding the center for the improvement of student learning.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Hasegawa, McCoy, P. Sullivan, McDermott, Upthegrove, Pettigrew and Morrell.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Reassigns the authority for the Center for Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) from the Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Governor's office.
- Creates an Education Ombudsman's office within the CISL to provide information and dispute investigation and resolution services to parents, districts, and others.
- Creates an education advisory committee to advise and make recommendations to the Governor regarding the effectiveness of the CISL and the education ombudsman's office, methods to increase community involvement, and ways to improve educational opportunities for all students.

Hearing Date: 1/26/06

Staff: Sarah Ream (786-7303).

Background:

Establishment of the Center for Improvement of Student Learning (CISL)

In 1993, as part of education reform, the Legislature created the CISL under the auspices of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Legislature directed the CISL to serve as an education information clearinghouse. The Legislature also created a non-appropriated account that was to be used for any gifts, grants, or endowments for the CISL.

In 1996, the Legislature expanded the CISL's role to include providing best practices research on programs and practices to improving reading instruction.

CISL's Funding History

When the CISL was created in 1993, the Legislature appropriated \$400,000.00 from the general fund-state for the 1993-95 biennium to support its operations. An additional \$500,000.00 was appropriated in the 1994 supplemental budget. For each of the 1995-97, 1997-99, and 1999-01 biennia, the CISL received a dedicated appropriation of \$1,260,000. Each budget proviso stated

that the funds were provided for technical assistance related to education reform through the OSPI, in consultation with the CISL.

In the 2001-03 biennial budget, the Legislature ceased providing dedicated funding for the CISL.

Summary of Bill:

The Center for Improvement of Student Learning (CISL)

Authority for the CISL is assigned from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to the Governor's office.

The CISL's primary purpose is to provide assistance and advice to parents, school board members, educators, and the public regarding strategies for assisting student learning. The CISL is directed to: (1) be an information clearinghouse, including maintaining a website; (2) provide best practices research and advice; (3) develop parental involvement materials and identify obstacles and solutions regarding increasing parental and community involvement in education; (4) help inform educators regarding school boards' powers; and (5) address methods to improve success rates of students in certain ethnic and racial groups. The CISL may contract with others to help provide these services.

The CISL account is created in the custody of the state treasurer for the benefit of the CISL. Private donation, gifts, and endowments directed to the CISL will be deposited into this account.

Creation of the Education Ombudsman's Office

An education ombudsman's office is created within the CISL. The education ombudsman is appointed by the Governor and reports to the Governor and the director of the CISL. The duties of the ombudsman include providing information to students, parents, school districts and others regarding their rights and responsibilities relative to the public education system. The ombudsman is empowered to investigate complaints and to assist in the resolution of complaints lodged by parents and students.

The ombudsman may contract with non-profit organizations and government agencies (except for schools, school districts, or current employees of either) to provide ombudsman services around the state.

The ombudsman and regional education ombudsmen will not be liable for acts associated with the good faith performance of the ombudsman's duties. The ombudsman must keep all matters under investigation confidential, except as necessary to perform the ombudsman's duties. Records regarding ombudsman investigations are not subject to public disclosure under the Public Records Act. If the ombudsman believes any public official, employee or other person has committed a crime, the ombudsman must report this fact to the appropriate authorities.

Creation of the Education Advisory Committee

An education advisory committee is created within the governor's office. Of the committee's members, five must be parents (one of these shall have a student enrolled in special education and one shall be a member of the Washington Parent Teacher Association), one member shall be chosen from each of the four ethnic commissions, and one member shall be a teacher or

administrator. Committee members should represent the geographic and ethnic diversity of this state.

The advisory committee will make recommendations to the Governor regarding, among other things, the effectiveness of the CISL and the education ombudsman's office, methods to increase community involvement, and ways to improve educational opportunities for all students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2006.

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