
Education Committee

SSB 5664

Brief Description: Improving teachers' skills with regard to children with learning differences.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Eide, Brandland, Regala, Thibaudeau, Stevens, Keiser, Kline and Rasmussen.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires that school-level plans to achieve school-level goals related to the state learning goal for reading, writing, and communication include research-based assessment and instructional strategies for students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and language disabilities.

Hearing Date: March 21, 2005

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

School-Based Plans

The Washington Basic Education Act (Act) directs school districts to provide opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills essential to read with comprehension, write with skill, and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and setting. This is commonly known as learning goal number one and is one of four state learning goals under the Act. Student performance on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is intended to demonstrate student mastery of the state learning goals. The Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) has established annual goals for student performance on the WASL, and schools and districts must report annually to parents and the community on the progress made in reaching these goals. Each school also must develop a school-level plan to achieve the school's student performance goals for meeting the state standard on the WASL.

Teacher Skills and Salary Allocation

Certificated personnel are required to complete a minimum of 150 clock hours of continuing education requirements every five years for renewal of the certificate. This clock-hour requirement can be met through completing in-service training courses, continuing education courses, and internships.

The statewide Salary Allocation Model for certificated staff (SAM) provides increased funding after completion of specified numbers of college credits. The SAM does not use clock-hours to calculate increases. For certificated personnel who elect to complete clock-hours instead of

earning college credits, state law defines how the completion of clock hours translates into college credits for purposes of an increase on the SAM. For example, the completion of 10 in-service training or continuing education clock hours is equal to one college credit. Credits earned, however, are applied to the SAM only if the course content meets certain criteria. One of the criterion is that the content be consistent with the school-based plan to achieve the school's student performance goals.

Dyslexia and Dysgraphia

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability, which results in students having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties in other language skills such as spelling writing, and speaking. It is referred to as a learning disability because dyslexia can have an adverse affect on student academic performance.

Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder manifested in a difficulty with handwriting. There are several different kinds of dysgraphia. Some people with dysgraphia have handwriting that is often illegible and shows irregular and inconsistent letter formations. Others write legibly, but very slowly and/or very small. When these individuals revert to printing, as they often do, their writing is often a random mixture of upper- and lower-case letters. In all cases of dysgraphia, writing requires inordinate amounts of energy, stamina, and time.

Summary of Bill:

The school-based plan to achieve the school's student performance goals related to learning goal number one must include research-based assessment and instructional strategies for students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, and language disabilities as applicable and appropriate for individual certificated instructional staff.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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