

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1708

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, March 23, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to dropout prevention.

**Brief Description:** Regarding dropout prevention.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Lovick, Quall, Dickerson, Cox, Haigh, Kenney, McDermott, O'Brien, Sells, B. Sullivan, Appleton, Simpson, Kagi, Darneille, Morrell, Green, P. Sullivan, Ormsby, McCoy, Chase and Moeller).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/07/05, 98-0.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 3/17/05, 3/23/05 [DPA].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Carrell, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Mulliken, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

**Staff:** Brian Jeffries (786-7422)

**Background:** Under current state law, each school district's high school program is required to report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) the number of students in grades nine through twelve who drop out of school over a four-year period. Additionally, school districts must report the dropout rates of students in each of the grades nine through twelve, disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability status, and the causes and reasons attributed to students for having dropped out of school. SPI is required to report these dropout statistics to the Legislature annually.

The Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) has the statutory authority to establish high school dropout reduction goals for students in grades seven through twelve, and adopt these goals by rule. The commission must present these goals to the Legislature in a time frame that would allow the Legislature to take statutory action if such action is deemed necessary.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The SPI is directed to review and evaluate the most promising dropout prevention programs and practices, including programs using non-punitive approaches to school discipline, and report to the Legislature by December 2005. The SPI will recommend the most promising comprehensive and targeted dropout prevention programs and practices. The SPI also is directed to recommend policy and other changes to enhance the ability of career and technical education programs and skills centers to further contribute to dropout prevention.

School districts are required to include students in grades seven and eight in their annual reporting of student enrollments and dropout data to the SPI.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in conjunction with the Administrative Office of the Courts is required to convene a work group to evaluate, and as needed, recommend modifications and additions to state statutes and administrative rules that issues pertaining to student truancy, the definition of excused and unexcused absences, attendance, and data collection requirements for school dropouts, student transfer, and student attendance. The work group is comprised of representatives of state education agencies, school practitioners and administrators, truancy officers and truancy board members, members of the courts systems, the Attorney General's office, members of the Legislature and other interested parties. OSPI must report the findings of the work group to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Legislature no later than January 10, 2006.

**Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** The requirement that SPI establish goals for dropout reduction and high school graduation rates for students in grades seven through twelve is eliminated. The requirement that SPI establish these goals in annual incremental improvements for schools and districts starting in the 2005-06 school year and must meet or exceed the goals set by the A+ Commission in 2003 is also eliminated. The workgroup to examine issues pertaining to the Becca laws, student attendance, and data collection is added.  
**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The dropout issue is one that is persistent and damaging. Dropping out of school has long-term damaging consequences for youth. There are significant negative impacts on youth as well as on our communities and our economy. Serious attention must be paid to our state's high dropout rates, and it's not easy to address. Our school administrators are supportive of efforts to decrease our dropout rates. Progress has been made, but much still needs to be done. Principals are committed to work to address the dropout problem.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Representative John Lovick, prime sponsor; Don Rash, AWSP; Wes Pruitt, WTECB.