

SENATE BILL REPORT

HCR 4408

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, April 19, 2005

Brief Description: Creating a joint select committee on secondary education.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Ormsby, Dunn and McDermott.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 4/19/05 [DP, w/oRec].

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

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Schoesler.

Staff: Brian Jeffries (786-7422)

Background: In 2004, approximately 39 percent of students in grade 10 met or exceeded state standards in all three tested content areas: reading, writing, and mathematics. Of the graduating class cohort in 2004, 66 percent graduated in four years with a regular high school diploma. Of those students who graduated from high school in 2003 and immediately attended a state public community or technical college, 55 percent needed to take one or more pre-college (remedial) courses.

Summary of Bill: A joint select committee, composed of eight legislators, is created to examine the basic structure of middle schools and high schools. The committee membership consists of four members from each legislative chamber, selected from each major caucus by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate.

The joint select committee will:

- examine the rate of academic improvement in middle and high schools;
- review state and national literature on secondary school redesign;
- identify the extent to which high schools have organized to support student learning and improved achievement;
- examine the effect of the current delivery model on achievement gaps and dropout rates;
- examine successful organizational models within the state, nationally, and internationally;
- consult with experts and stakeholders, directly or through subcommittees; and
- report its findings and recommendations to the House and Senate committees on education policy by January 15, 2006.

Members of the joint select committee will receive per diem, travel, and legislative committee staff support. The joint select committee expires June 30, 2006.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

Testimony For: (PRO) Elementary schools have made significant progress toward student achievement under our school reform efforts. Unfortunately, there is a drop-off in achievement at the middle schools and a stall in high schools. We, as a state and nation, have focused much of our effort and attention on elementary schools. Now is the time, especially with the Certificate of Academic Achievement requirements coming in 2008, to focus our efforts on achieving performance goals in our middle and high schools. There are models out there to support the re-design, organization, and improvement of our high schools.

Other: The legislature is putting a lot of energy in passing the finance study. The Legislature should prioritize and focus its attention on the finance study, and only secondarily on improvement of high schools. There should be stakeholders on the committee, not just consulted.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Dave Quall, prime sponsor; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; Wes Pruitt, WTECB; Rainer Houser, AWSP. OTHER: Bob Butts, OSPI; Gary King, WEA.