

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6472

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As of January 27, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to the retention and promotion of students.

**Brief Description:** Requiring school districts to adopt policies for the retention and promotion of students.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rasmussen and Carrell.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 1/26/06.

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

**Staff:** Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

**Background:** While many issues in public education are left to the local control of individual school districts, there are certain provisions that are applicable to all districts. For example, each school district must adopt policies addressing threats of violence to students or employees, must report incidents regarding weapon possessions, must notify parents of a student who is allegedly the victim of sexual misconduct by a school employee, and must provide notice of pesticide use.

The Washington State School Directors' Association has drafted sample policies for promotion and retention of students. Under the policies, a student will be promoted to the next grade after successfully completing one year of study at a specific grade level. Retention may be beneficial to a student if he or she does not demonstrate minimum competency but should not be considered unless the student will likely benefit with minimum social and emotional disruption. The sample policies also state that, if possible, before the end of the third quarter, the teacher and principal will confer about any possible retentions, and the parents or guardian must be invited for a meeting where information about the student's progress will be presented. Before the end of the school year, the parent, principal, and teacher should meet again to discuss the student's progress.

**Summary of Bill:** Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, all school boards are required to adopt a policy, or amend any existing local policy, regarding student promotion and retention.

The policy, which must be adopted at a public meeting of the school board, has to provide for parental notification when a student is identified as being at risk for retention. The notice must be provided as early in the school year and as early in the student's school career as practicable. The policy also must provide a student's parent or guardian the opportunity to consult with the teacher responsible for the decision to promote or retain the student. Additionally, the policy must indicate the remediation opportunities available to students who are recommended for retention or who are identified as at risk for retention.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

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

**Testimony For:** It is important to ensure that parents and kids are on the same page, and it is vital that parents are knowledgeable and are informed about how their child is performing in school. Parents should be involved in any discussions about possible retentions before it is too late for a remedy.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Senator Marilyn Rasmussen, prime sponsor.