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HOUSE BILL 2245

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State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Representatives Quall, Tom, Ormsby, Hunt, Ericks, Haigh and McDermott

Read first time 02/28/2005. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to middle schools and high schools; and creating a  
2 new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that, over the  
5 past decade, student learning has improved faster at elementary schools  
6 than at middle schools and high schools. The legislature also finds  
7 that the achievement gap between white students and students of color  
8 and low-income students grows in middle school and high school. For  
9 example, forty-nine and three-tenths of one percent of African-American  
10 fourth graders meet the Washington assessment of student learning  
11 standard for reading, but only thirty-two and two-tenths of one percent  
12 meet the standard in tenth grade. These numbers understate the  
13 decline, because they do not factor in the disproportionate number of  
14 African-American students who drop out of school. The legislature  
15 further finds that there is broad recognition that the design of middle  
16 schools and high schools is an important component of this problem, and  
17 that there is a growing body of research and experience that may help  
18 schools accelerate student learning improvement by changing the way  
19 schools are organized.

1 (2) A task force is established to examine the basic design of  
2 middle schools and high schools. The task force shall be composed of  
3 four members of the house of representatives, two from each major  
4 caucus, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; four  
5 members of the senate, two from each major caucus, appointed by the  
6 president of the senate; two school district superintendents chosen by  
7 the Washington association of school administrators; two principals  
8 chosen by the Washington association of school principals; two school  
9 board members chosen by the Washington state school directors  
10 association; the superintendent of public instruction; a representative  
11 of the governor; and a representative of the Gates foundation.

12 (3) The task force shall:

13 (a) Examine the rate of student academic improvement in Washington  
14 middle schools and high schools and state and national research on  
15 redesign efforts;

16 (b) Identify successful models for middle school and high school  
17 organization, both within Washington and nationally, that have been  
18 shown to:

19 (i) Reduce the dropout rate;

20 (ii) Close the achievement gap;

21 (iii) Accelerate academic improvement;

22 (iv) Improve the teaching and learning of math; and

23 (v) Provide more challenging opportunities for students who meet  
24 standards early and more flexible options after the sophomore year.

25 (4) By December 15, 2005, the task force shall report to the  
26 governor, the superintendent of public instruction, and the fiscal and  
27 education policy committees of the legislature. The report shall  
28 include a plan for structural change and improvement in Washington  
29 middle schools and high schools. The plan shall identify the roles and  
30 responsibilities of state policymakers, local school districts,  
31 communities, businesses, principals, teachers, parents, and students in  
32 carrying out the plan.

33 (5) Staff services to the task force shall be provided by senate  
34 committee services and the house of representatives office of program  
35 research.

36 (6) Legislative members of the task force shall receive per diem  
37 and travel as provided in RCW 44.04.120. The agency or organization

1 that appoints the other task force members shall be responsible for any  
2 per diem and travel provided to its task force members.

3 (7) The task force expires June 30, 2006.

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