

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2137

As Passed House:

January 23, 2008

Title: An act relating to allowing certificated and classified school employees' children with disabilities to enroll in the district where the employee is assigned.

Brief Description: Allowing school employees' children with disabilities to enroll in special services programs in the district where the employee is assigned.

Sponsors: By Representatives Wallace, Skinner, Kagi, Hankins, Roberts, Chase, Kenney, Moeller, Simpson and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/20/07, 2/23/07 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/8/07, 96-0.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 1/23/08, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows school employees' children with disabilities to enroll in special services programs in the district where the employee is assigned.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, McDermott, Roach, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Staff: Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

Background:

Generally, a public school student must attend school in the district where the student lives (resident students). However, there are exceptions. A student may apply to attend a different

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school within their district (intra-district transfer), or outside of the district where he or she lives (inter-district transfer). School districts are required to have policies regarding how such applications are decided, and state law provides specific reasons that districts can reject applications.

School districts must accept application from non-resident students who are children of full-time certificated and classified school employees. Such students may enroll at the school where the parent/employee works, or at a school forming the district's K through 12 continuum which includes the school where the parent/employee works. Districts may reject applications from non-resident children of district employees because of prior discipline or behavioral problems, or if enrollment would displace a child who is a resident of the district.

Each school district is required to provide education for all children with disabilities between the ages of three and 21. This includes preschool, elementary school, and secondary school. By September 1, 2009, each school district is required to provide, or contract for, early intervention services to all eligible children with disabilities from birth to three years of age.

Summary of Bill:

A school district must allow the children of full-time certificated and classified school employees to enroll at a school in the district that provides early intervention or preschool services for special education students, so long as the student is eligible for such services. This requirement shall apply to both resident and non-resident students. A district may refuse enrollment of a non-resident student if it would displace a resident student.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) A constituent who works in one school district, but lives in another, has a three and a half year old child who needs additional speech services. The district where the constituent works refused to enroll the child because it did not want to set the precedent. Early intervention makes a difference, as it is important to enable children to get the most they can out of their school experience. Allowing the enrollment of a child in a school or district where a parent works allows the parent to be more involved with the child's school services. It also has practical benefits, such as common vacation times for the parent and child. Many believed the current law covered this situation, but it does not. This is a simple fix that will make the law more clear.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Wallace, prime sponsor; Representative Skinner; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; and Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.