
Education Committee

HB 2136

Brief Description: Creating the improving core subject instruction for all students pilot program.

Sponsors: Representatives Fromhold, Sommers, Kenney, Moeller and Ormsby; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Reauthorizes and expands a special services pilot program to include up to seven school districts, including two districts currently participating in such a program.
- Requires participating districts to implement a multi-tiered set of instructional interventions designed to address students struggling with reading, written language, and mathematics and reduce the number of students referred to special education.
- Authorizes funding for the program based on the difference between a district's special education enrollment allocation before entering the pilot program and its actual special education allocation.

Hearing Date: 2/23/07

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

In 2003, the Legislature authorized two special services pilot programs to provide early and intensive intervention services in reading and language. The objective was to reduce the number of children who may eventually require special education services. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) chose two districts to participate in the pilot program: Walla Walla and Vancouver.

Under the pilot program, the districts were required to use multiple forms of diagnosis of student literacy, implement a tiered set of research-based interventions, and involve parents in the diagnosis and interventions. The districts received special funding for the program based on the

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assumption that their special education enrollments would be reduced along with their special education funding allocation, but that additional resources would be needed to provide the intervention services that led to such a reduction. The appropriation for Fiscal Year 2007 is \$799,000 for the two districts.

A final evaluation of the pilot program found that overall student performance in the two districts is progressing toward proficiency in reading and writing; there has been a trend of reduced numbers of students needing special education services; and surveyed teachers and parents strongly support the instructional approaches used under the program. The evaluation recommended expansion to include up to five additional districts and inclusion of interventions for mathematics. The pilot programs expire June 30, 2007.

Summary of Bill:

Seven school districts may participate in a special services pilot program, including the two districts currently participating in such a program. The program is designed to implement high quality, research-based general education instructional programs to meet the needs of struggling students, while reducing the number of students inappropriately referred to and placed in special education. The goal of the program is to effectively address reading, written language, and mathematics difficulties, resulting in a substantially greater proportion of students meeting state and federal performance standards. The program begins in the 2007-08 school year and ends in the 2010-11 school year.

Funding for the program is from a special appropriation. The amount is equal to a participating school district's special education allocation based on the average special education enrollment in the year prior to entering the pilot program minus the district's actual allocation for special education. The SPI shall adjust the funding factors to reflect changes to the special education funding formula that impact the funding mechanism of the project. Participation in the pilot program does not affect a district's ability to access the special education safety net for high cost students.

Participating districts must implement the program as part of the general education curriculum for all students; use a multi-tiered service delivery system to address student needs in reading, written language, and mathematics; use an assessment system to conduct universal screening, progress monitoring, and outcomes; assure that parents are well-informed of student progress and their right to make a referral for a special education evaluation; and participate in an annual evaluation of the program.

By December 15, the SPI must submit a report to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees summarizing the effectiveness of the pilot program and recommending whether it should be continued, expanded, or modified. The pilot program expires June 30, 2011.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: This bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.