
Education Committee

HB 2810

Brief Description: Enhancing resources and assistance in school districts with concentrations of English language learners.

Sponsors: Representatives Sullivan, Quall, Upthegrove, Anderson, Conway, Kenney, Haigh, Hudgins, Santos, Simpson and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides enhanced funding through the Learning Assistance Program formula for school districts with more than 20 percent student enrollment in the Transitional Bilingual Program and more than 40 percent of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch.

Hearing Date: 1/22/08

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Transitional Bilingual Program (TBP). School districts receive supplemental funds on a per-student basis to provide special instruction to help English language learner (ELL) students reach competency in English. Once students reach a specified level of competency on the Washington Language Proficiency Test, they exit the TBP.

The ELL students are not evenly distributed in school districts across the state. In May 2007, 188 districts reported no bilingual enrollment. Fifty-three districts had more than 10 percent of their total enrollment in the TBP. Twenty-five districts had more than 20 percent of students in the TBP.

Learning Assistance Program (LAP). School districts also receive supplemental funds to provide struggling students with remediation. Unlike the TBP funds, which are based on individual students, the LAP funds are allocated based on the proportion of low income students in the district (those eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch). The LAP allocation reflects the high correlation between student poverty and low academic achievement, but funds are used for any student who needs assistance.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Research on federal Title I programs has found that in schools with high concentrations of low income students, the negative impact of poverty on student achievement tends to be school-wide and more significant than would otherwise be expected. Within the LAP funding formula, there is an additional allocation for school districts with above-average enrollment of low income students. School districts with more than 40 percent low income students receive additional dollars based on the difference between their percentage of low income students and the 40 percent threshold.

In Washington, there is also a high correlation between the ELL students and student poverty. Of the 25 school districts with more than 20 percent of student enrolled in the TBP, all but two also exceeded 40 percent low income students, and those two districts reported no low income data.

Summary of Bill:

In addition to funds allocated on the basis of income factors, enhanced funds are allocated through the LAP formula for school districts where more than 20 percent of students are eligible for and enrolled in the TBP and where the percent of K-12 enrollment who are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch also exceeds 40 percent.

The enhanced LAP allocation is calculated using the district's percent enrollment in the TBP for the prior year, minus the 20 percent threshold, and times the district's total full-time equivalent student enrollment for the prior year. The resulting number is multiplied by the per-funded student allocation rate for the LAP program established in the Appropriations Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16th, 2008.

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