

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6376

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, January 28, 2008

Title: An act relating to the basic education kindergarten through grade three certificated instructional staff allocation.

Brief Description: Regarding the basic education funding allocation for certificated instructional staff.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Tom, Weinstein, Rasmussen, Fairley, Eide, Kilmer, Oemig, Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Hobbs, Franklin, Fraser, Kauffman and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/23/08, 1/28/08 [DP-WM, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Eide, Hobbs, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig, Rasmussen and Weinstein.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Minority Member; Holmquist.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Brandland.

Staff: Roman Dixon (786-7438)

Background: In order to carry out its constitutional responsibility, the Legislature passed the Basic Education Act of 1977 (BEA), which defined a "basic education" by establishing goals, minimum program hours, teacher contact hours, and a mix of course offerings for a school district to provide. Currently, at least some portion of six programs (general apportionment, the special education program for students with disabilities, some pupil transportation, the Learning Assistance Program for remediation assistance, the Transitional Bilingual Education program, and educational programs in juvenile detention centers and state institutions) fall within the Legislature's definition of basic education.

The general apportionment formula, which represents approximately two-thirds of the total amount of funding provided by the state, provides foundational funding to school districts for

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staffing and other costs associated with operating a school. One of the current components of the general apportionment formula is an allocation for certificated instructional staff (CIS), which includes teachers, counselors, librarians, and other instructional staff requiring certification. In grades kindergarten to third grade, the general apportionment formula provides 49 full-time-equivalent CIS staff positions for every 1,000 students. Outside of its definition of "basic education," the Legislature also currently provides an additional 4.2 full-time-equivalent CIS staff positions for every 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through third grade. This means that the current general apportionment allocation provides 53.2 full-time-equivalent CIS staff positions for every 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through third grade or one CIS staff position for every 18.8 K- 3 students. However, since school districts have discretion in deciding the types of staff hired with their general apportionment allocations, this does not represent the actual class size in any particular district or school.

Summary of Bill: If school districts can document an actual ratio in grades kindergarten through three that is equal to or greater than the sum of the base allocation designated in the formula adopted by the Legislature and the six year pre-designated allocation plan, the district will be eligible for an additional allocation of funds; these will be used to acquire additional certificated instructional staff (beyond the base allocation). Those additional funds may also be used to provide improvements or additions to facilities directly related to class size reductions in grades kindergarten through three.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 8, 2008.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Washington is currently 46th in the nation in average class size. We have a huge investment in lowering class size and must continue to invest in smaller classes in grades K-3 or risk losing the investment. When a teacher has a large class, students who need individualized attention can't get it. Research shows that a reduction in class size will yield effective results. Smaller classes directly correlate to children remaining in school. The Superintendent of Public Instruction stands in support of this bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Mary Lindquist, Cara Haney, Anna Hatlestad, Washington Educators Association; Jennifer Priddy, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Alice Zillah, foster parent; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.