
Education Appropriations Committee

HB 2041

Brief Description: Concerning student transportation funding.

Sponsors: Representatives Finn, Cox, Haigh, Priest, Hunt, Sullivan, Van De Wege, Ormsby and Goodman; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Implements a new student transportation funding formula in the 2011-12 school year.
- Eliminates the radius mile, changes ridership count to three times per year, and adds an allowable to-from trip for extended day academic programs, effective within the 2011-12 school year.
- Requires an annual report on efficiency reviews of district operations.

Hearing Date: 2/18/09

Staff: Wendy Polzin (786-7137)

Background:

Washington provides funding to school districts for pupil transportation using a funding method that was developed in the early 1980s. This method has not been significantly changed since its development.

The Legislature's funding method is designed to fund the transportation of eligible students to and from school at 100 percent or as close thereto as reasonably possible. Certain types of transportation are not funded under the formula, such as transportation for athletic events, or other extracurricular programs not considered part of the basic education program.

The 2005-07 Operating Budget mandated that the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee (JLARC) review pupil transportation funding in Washington. The JLARC study found that there

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was a 95 percent probability that "to and from" pupil transportation expenditures exceeded state revenues by between \$92,619,322 and \$114,376,345 in the 2004-05 school year.

In the 2007-09 biennium, the Legislature directed the Office of Financial Management to contract for a study on two alternative student transportation funding formula options. The final report, "Development of Student Transportation Funding Methodology Options for Washington State", containing the options was presented to the Legislature in December 2008.

Summary of Bill:

This bill takes effect in two parts. Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, a new student transportation funding model is implemented. The model will use regression analysis to distribute state transportation funds to districts. In addition, the radius mile is removed, ridership counts are increased to three times per year, and extended academic day transportation is included within allowable to-from trips.

Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, efficiency reporting on districts will begin. Individual reviews will be conducted on districts with 90% or less efficiency. A report summarizing the efficiency reviews and resulting changes made by districts shall be submitted to the fiscal and education committees by December 1st of each year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 6, 2009.

Effective Date: Sections 2 through 7 of the bill, which implement changes associated with the new transportation funding formula, take effect September 1, 2011.

Section 8 of the bill, which establishes the efficiency reviews of districts by regional transportation coordinators, takes effect September 1, 2013.