

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 1879

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As of March 26, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to the delivery of educational services to children who are deaf and hearing impaired.

**Brief Description:** Providing for the delivery of educational services to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Education Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Jacks, Kagi, Moeller, Orcutt, Wallace, Appleton and Kenney).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/10/09, 96-0.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/26/09.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Brandon Roché (786-7405)

**Background:** In 2002 the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) examined various models of deaf education and service delivery. In 2006 the Institute studied issues relating to the governance and operation of the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD). Following that study, the Legislature appropriated \$55,000 to the Institute for the purpose of contracting with a facilitator to conduct a series of meetings with stakeholders to discuss strengths and weaknesses of educational services available statewide to children who are deaf or hearing impaired.

In June 2007 the Institute published its report recommending that a single state agency be charged with overseeing the quality and outcomes of local, regional, and statewide schools and programs serving students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind. These recommendations represented a consensus of stakeholders.

**Summary of Bill:** The Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss (Center) is established. The WSD in Vancouver will remain as part of the Center. The currently appointed Superintendent of the WSD will become the Director of the Center and the WSD Board of Trustees will become the Governing Board for the Center. The governance structure of the Center will be the same as it is for the WSD.

The Center's primary functions will be to:

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- provide statewide leadership and support for coordination of regionally-delivered deaf education services in the full range of communication modalities;
- manage and supervise the WSD; and
- collaborate with public and private partners in developing an applied research center for training and professional development for educators serving children who are deaf or hearing impaired.

The powers and duties of the Director of the Center include all powers and duties currently defined for the Superintendent of the WSD, plus the following additional duties:

- providing technical assistance and administrative support to educational service districts for the regional delivery of services to students who are deaf or hearing impaired; and
- providing technical assistance and support as appropriate to local and regional efforts to build critical mass and communication-rich networking opportunities for children who are deaf or hearing impaired and their families.

The Director and Board of Trustees of the Center will consult with stakeholders for the purpose of planning the implementation of demonstration programs in two educational service districts (ESDs) for the delivery of education services in the full range of communication modalities to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

The Director and Board of Trustees will select and consult with two ESDs, one of which must be in Eastern Washington. By December 31, 2010, the Board and Director will brief the Legislature and the Governor regarding the implementation and operation of the demonstration sites.

The term "School for the Deaf" is replaced with "Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss" in numerous statutes.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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: We've made a couple of adjustments because of the fiscal situation. This changes the model for how we deliver services to deaf children and their families throughout the state. This bill allows that to continue developing. There has been a lot of work done to develop this plan and it is a good plan.

We have a unique partnership with the Washington School for the Deaf that shows the importance of this bill. When we go out in the school districts to provide support, we're seeing a great need for services to provide within the school districts. We need to take the information we have and get it to the local school districts and teachers; this also allows them to share the information with the next child that comes along with similar needs.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Jacks, prime sponsor; Suzanne Quigley, Listen & Talk.