

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 6643

As Passed Senate, February 10, 2010

Title: An act relating to second-class school districts and compliance reports.

Brief Description: Regarding compliance reports for second-class school districts.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Sheldon, Hewitt, Brown, Honeyford, Parlette, McAuliffe and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/03/10, 2/04/10 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/10/10, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair, Early Learning; Oemig, Vice Chair, K-12; King, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Gordon, Hobbs, McDermott and Roach.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: School districts are required to report a myriad of information to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). The requirements appear in several chapters of Title 28A of the RCW, which encompasses the laws related to the common schools. Common schools are public schools operating a program for kindergarten through 12th grade or any part thereof.

A second-class school district has less than 2,000 students. Currently, 187 of Washington's 295 school districts are second-class.

Summary of Engrossed Bill: Beginning September 1, 2010, second-class districts may annually submit a condensed compliance report to the SPI. The districts that choose to submit these reports, must:

- dedicate a public meeting for reviewing the report and receiving public testimony;
- adopt the report at a public meeting; and
- require the report to be signed by the school district superintendent and the school board chair, and be notarized.

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.

School districts may voluntarily submit compliance information to the SPI concerning programs not funded. Compliance requests do not include data required to be submitted by federal or state law, including data for a comprehensive K-12 education data improvement system.

The SPI must develop a condensed compliance report form for second-class school districts by July 1, 2010. The form will allow the districts to choose one of the following: it has complied or received a State Board of Education waiver; it has not complied and includes an explanation or steps taken to comply; or it has received a grant for less than half a full-time equivalent instructional staff. In order to determine whether districts have documentation to support the condensed compliance report, SPI may conduct random audits.

The majority of chapters in Title 28A include a provision that allows second-class school districts to meet their compliance requirements with a condensed compliance report.

The act includes a federal severability clause.

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: Filling out forms is the same for small and large districts. It is not worth the time to apply for grants in small districts, because it is too complicated. OSPI used to have something similar for second-class districts. This is a good bill. We are concerned about whether or not it will continue to require second-class districts to submit data. This is another attempt to go at unfunded mandates by getting rid of paperwork. The flexibility could save time and money. We suggest it be extended to all school districts.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Schoesler, prime sponsor; Bob Butts, OSPI; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors Association; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.