

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6760

As of January 30, 2010

Title: An act relating to the basic education instructional allocation distribution formula.

Brief Description: Regarding the basic education instructional allocation distribution formula.

Sponsors: Senators Oemig, Gordon, McDermott, McAuliffe, Tom, Kauffman, Fairley, Ranker, Hargrove, Kline, Murray, Eide, Franklin, Hobbs and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/28/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Currently, the state funding allocation for the basic education instructional program is based on instructional, administrative, and classified staff per student ratios, staff compensation factors, and nonemployee-related costs. School districts receive additional categorical funding for the Learning Assistance Program, Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program, and Special Education Program.

Last session, the Legislature passed ESHB 2261, expanding the definition of basic education by increasing the number of instructional hours; increasing the minimum number of credits required for high school graduation; and adding all-day kindergarten, the educational program for highly capable students, and student transportation to and from school. These changes are to be phased in according to an implementation schedule adopted by the Legislature and fully implemented by September 1, 2018. Additionally, the legislation created the framework for new K-12 funding formulas based on prototypical schools to take effect September 1, 2010. The new formulas have more categories of staff and discreet subsets of maintenance, supplies, and operating costs. The Office of Financial Management (OFM), with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), were directed to convene a working group to develop the details of the prototypical school funding formulas. The working group reviewed the components of the new prototypical school formulas, discussed the distribution methodology for individual elements of the formula, and determined the values in the formulas that represent current or baseline funding, which was included in its December 1, 2009, report to the Legislature.

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.

ESHB 2261 also created the Quality Education Council (QEC) composed of eight legislators, a representative of the Governor's Office, and representatives of the four state-level educational agencies: OSPI, the State Board of Education (SBE), the Professional Educator Standards Board, and the Department of Early Learning. The QEC is to recommend and inform the ongoing implementation by the Legislature of an evolving program of basic education. The QEC submitted an initial report to the Governor and the Legislature on January 13, 2010. The QEC submitted 13 recommendations, including the following for the 2010 Legislature:

1. enact a law replacing current funding formulas with the new prototypical school funding formulas with the baseline values as determined by the funding formula technical working group; and
2. increase the Maintenance, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC) in the prototypical school funding formula based on data collected by OSPI about costs incurred by school districts, phased in over a three-year period beginning in the 2011-12 school year.

Summary of Bill: The current funding formulas are replaced in statute with the new prototypical school funding formulas using the baseline values as determined by the funding formula working group – except the MSOC values are based on data collected by OSPI about costs incurred by school districts, which makes them higher than the current or baseline values. The class size values are adjusted in order to maintain a cost neutral impact at the state-level

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2010.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2011.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We support translating the current funding values into the new prototypical school funding structure because it creates transparency, and provides a greater understanding for everyone to know what are the state funds and the additional needs; Using the current funding values reflects the hard work done by the funding formula technical working group. We support the specific funding of gifted programs because there is a high return on the dollars that the state invests in this program.

OTHER: We have a concern that the bill translates the current level of funding into the new funding formula except to fund MSOC over the current level, which buys less teachers (estimated to be 7700 less teachers). This makes it cost neutral now but in the future it will not be neutral because compensation is increasing faster than MSOC costs. MSOC was debated at length by the workgroup and they considered these things and landed on their recommended distribution because it is more reflective of reality. The current funding values should be established in statute as a baseline and don't confuse it with the policy enhancements.

Persons Testifying: PRO: George Scarola, League of Education Voters; Mitch Denning , Alliance of Education Assns; Marcia Holland, Janis Traven, WA Coalition for Gifted Education; Doug Nelson, Public School Employees; Dan Steele, WA State School Directors Assn; Barbara Mertens, WA Assn of School Administrators; Kim Howard, PTA.

OTHER: Jennifer Priddy, OSPI; Randy Parr, WEA.