

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5649

As of February 17, 2013

Title: An act relating to using the collaborative schools process for required action districts that continue to struggle to improve student academic achievement.

Brief Description: Using the collaborative schools process for required action districts that continue to struggle to improve student academic achievement.

Sponsors: Senators Rolfes, McAuliffe, Billig, Mullet, Frockt and Murray.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/18/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 2010, the Washington Legislature created an accountability system intended to be implemented in two phases. Phase I uses federal guidelines to designate the lowest achieving schools that are eligible for federal Title I program funds to apply for a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) to implement federal intervention strategies. The system was voluntary for the first year, but a required action process began in 2011. Four Required Action Districts (RAD) were designated. The RADs are in their second year of implementing a three-year federal SIG to improve the school culture and increase student performance. It is projected that federal funds for future cohorts of RADs will not be forthcoming.

At the end of the three-year RAD plan, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) whether the RAD has made progress and no longer has a school identified as persistently lowest achieving and therefore should be released from the RAD designation. If SBE determines that the RAD has not met the requirements for release, then the district remains in required action and must submit a new plan.

Intent language in the 2010 legislation provides for a Phase II using a state achievement index (Index), if federally approved, to identify schools in need of improvement, including schools that are not eligible for federal Title I program funds, to implement state and local intervention models with state funds. The Index did not receive federal approval. SBE

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currently uses the Index to recognize successful schools through the Washington Achievement Awards.

When the 2010 Legislature created the Required Action process, a Joint Select Committee on Education Accountability (JSCEA) was also created. JSCEA's tasks include, among other things, examining options and models for significant state action, particularly in the case of a persistent lack of improvement by a RAD. The final report of the JSCEA is due by September 1, 2013.

In 2012, the Collaborative Schools for Innovation and Success (CSIS) pilot project was created authorizing colleges of education to collaborate with school districts to improve student achievement in low performing elementary schools and to increase the knowledge and skills of current and future educators. Four applications were approved, three were funded, and one is proceeding without state funds. Under the pilot project, a needs assessment must be conducted and a five-year plan submitted to OSPI and the Professional Educator Standards Board by March 15, 2013. An interim evaluation of the pilot project must be provided by December 1, 2015, and a final evaluation by September 1, 2018.

Summary of Bill: Beginning in 2013, as part of Phase II of the accountability system, non-Title I eligible schools may be identified as one of the state's persistently lowest achieving schools, subject to the same accountability requirements, and eligible for state funds provided for accountability.

The option for a RAD to remain in required action and submit a new plan when the RAD has not met the criteria for release is maintained. An additional option is created for OSPI to recommend that a RAD be required to participate in the CSIS pilot project. If SBE agrees, then the RAD is released from the RAD designation and must participate in the CSIS pilot project under a provided timeline. OSPI must allocate grants to support districts required to participate in the pilot project.

JSCEA must examine the use of the CSIS pilot project for addressing persistent lack of improvement by a RAD and recommend whether additional actions or monitoring should be implemented.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 16, 2013.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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