

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6555

As of February 6, 2014

Title: An act relating to systematic reviews of education investments.

Brief Description: Requiring the Washington institute for public policy to conduct systematic reviews of investments in education.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, Hill, Tom, Hobbs, Dammeier, Rivers and Fain.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/06/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Article IX, section 1 of the Washington Constitution provides that it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. The courts have interpreted this to mean that the state must define a Program of Basic Education and amply fund it. Legislation enacted in 2009 and 2010 provided for phased-in implementation of changes in both the Basic Education Program and the funding to support it.

The 2013-15 operating budget provided \$982 million in enhancements to the program of basic education, as follows:

- full-day kindergarten: \$89.8 million, increasing the percentage of funded enrollment from 22 percent to 43.75 percent;
- student transportation: \$131.7 million, fully funding the expected cost model;
- materials, supplies, and operating costs: \$374.0 million;
- early elementary class size reduction: \$103.6 million, to reduce K-1 funded class size in high poverty schools to 20.3 students;
- Learning Assistance Program: \$143.1 million;
- counselors and parent involvement coordinators: \$24.1 million;
- Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP): \$18.9 million for a new basic education program providing state-funded supplemental instruction following a student's exit from the TBIP; and
- instructional hours: \$97 million.

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.

The Washington Legislature created the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) in 1983. WSIPP is governed by a board of directors that represents the Legislature, Governor, and public universities. WSIPP's mission is to conduct non-partisan research at the direction of the Legislature or board of directors. Fiscal and administrative services for WSIPP are provided by The Evergreen State College.

Summary of Bill: Findings are made regarding the state funding of public education. Legislative intent to strengthen the educational system and to implement a method of analyzing how state investments in public education are impacting students is provided.

WSIPP must conduct ongoing systematic reviews and biannually report to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, in every even-numbered year. The reviews include a review of high-quality research to identify and update inventories of evidenced-based, research-based, and promising, early learning, K-12 and higher educational practices and services that lead to better educational outcomes and a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars. WSIPP must also review the state investments in the educational system, including early learning, K-12, and higher education, with a focus on K-12, to identify the investments that result in the most effective and evidenced-based practices. The initial analyses must focus on the funding provided in the 2013-15 operating budget for enhancements to the program of basic education.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 4, 2014.

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: The Legislature made a sizable investment in education last session and we should know how effective the investment is. The Legislature needs to fund programs that are helping students be successful.

OTHER: We support the effort to identify the evidence-based practices. But we have concerns about the direction to WSIPP to determine the impact of the investments made by the Legislature in the 2013-15 and to look at future investments by the Legislature. There were no specified outcomes associated with the investments. Schools are very diverse in the challenges their students bring, which will make it difficult to get a valid measure of the overall impacts of these investments. We are not sure that the meta-analysis that WSIPP routinely conducts is the way to approach the task. Until our schools are fully supported in all areas, underfunding in one area will limit the positive impacts of an investment. We recognize that the Legislature has a responsibility and obligation to be good stewards of public resources but we urge you to support implementation of the education reform that you have enacted. An option would allow them to choose the items to research and then prioritize the new investments.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Litzow, prime sponsor

OTHER: Shawn Lewis, WA Education Assn.; Ken Kanikeberg, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.