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## Education Committee

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### HJR 4210

**Brief Description:** Amending the Constitution to provide for a simple majority of voters voting to authorize school district bonds at general elections.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Gregerson, Muri, Santos, Orwall, Ryu, Hunter, Sells, Ormsby, Springer, Bergquist, Ortiz-Self, Kilduff, Moscoso, Peterson, Senn, Farrell, Hudgins, Fey, McBride, Fitzgibbon, Clibborn, Morris, Moeller, Takko, Wylie, Gregory, Riccelli, Walkinshaw, Hansen, Robinson, Kagi, Jinkins, Lytton, Tharinger, Goodman, Pettigrew, Cody, Carlyle, Sawyer, Stanford, Appleton, Dunshee, Tarleton, Van De Wege and Pollet.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Amends the state Constitution to authorize school districts to issue general obligation bonds for capital purposes, make payments on those bonds through the levy of taxes, and exceed a Constitutional debt limit with approval by a simple majority of the voters, rather than approval by 60 percent of the voters, at a general election where the total number of voters is at least 40 percent of the total at the last preceding general election.

**Hearing Date:** 2/16/15

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195).

#### Background:

The Washington State Constitution authorizes school districts to collect property tax revenues in excess of 1 percent of the assessed value of property in the district for capital or operating purposes and to assume excess debt when voters approve a levy or bond issue by certain margins. In order to issue general obligation bonds for capital purposes and make payments on those bonds through the levy of taxes, a school district must receive approval by 60 percent of the voters at an election where the total number of voters is at least 40 percent of the total at the last preceding general election. The Constitution also requires a 60 percent voter approval for a school district to incur debt exceeding 1.5 percent of the assessed value of property in the

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district. State statute imposes a lower threshold of .38 percent indebtedness for school districts and requires the 60 percent voter approval to exceed that threshold.

In 2007, the voters approved a Constitutional amendment allowing school districts to collect excess levies for purposes other than for general obligation bonds for capital purposes by a simple majority of the voters voting at an election for that purpose.

A joint resolution to change the Constitution must be approved by a two-thirds majority of both houses of the Legislature, followed by approval by a majority of the voters in the next general election.

**Summary of Bill:**

An amendment to the state Constitution is submitted to the voters at the next general election to authorize school districts to issue general obligation bonds for capital purposes, make payments on those bonds through the levy of taxes, and exceed the Constitutional debt limit with approval by a simple majority of the voters voting at a general election where the total number of voters is at least 40 percent of the total at the last preceding general election.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on 2/10/15.