

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6510

As of January 28, 2020

Title: An act relating to local effort assistance for small school districts and small remote and necessary plants.

Brief Description: Increasing local effort assistance for small school districts and small remote and necessary plants.

Sponsors: Senators Cleveland, Rivers, Wagoner, Wellman, Honeyford and King.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/22/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides additional local effort assistance to eligible small school districts with fewer than 300 students.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: Local Effort Assistance. The Local Effort Assistance program (LEA), also known as levy equalization, was created in 1987. Under the LEA program, the state provides additional funding to school districts that are at a disadvantage in raising enrichment levies due to low property values.

LEA is provided to any school district that does not generate an enrichment levy of at least \$1,550 per student when levying at a rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. An eligible school district's maximum LEA is the difference between the district's per pupil levy amount, based on a rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value, and \$1,550 per pupil, multiplied by the district's resident enrollment. Districts that are eligible for LEA but levy below a \$1.50 per \$1,000 rate receive LEA in proportion to their actual levy collection.

Beginning in 2022, state-tribal compact schools may also receive LEA in an amount equal to the enrichment levy per student for the school district in which the state-tribal compact

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school is located, multiplied by the state-tribal compact school's enrollment. The maximum LEA a state-tribal compact school can receive is capped at \$1,550 per student.

Small School District and Remote and Necessary Plant Funding. The state's public school funding model allocates funding to school districts based on assumed levels of staff and other resources necessary to support a prototypical school serving an assumed number of students at defined elementary, middle, and high school levels. For small school districts, and remote and necessary small school plants, additional staff units are provided to ensure a minimum level of staffing support. This additional funding is tiered based on student enrollment, and typically applies to those small districts and remote and necessary small school plants with fewer than 300 students.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Beginning in calendar year 2021, for LEA eligible small school districts, LEA is provided in an amount equal to that currently provided under law and the following additional amounts:

- \$950 per pupil for small school districts with 100 or fewer full-time enrolled students; and
- \$750 per pupil for small school districts with 101 to 299 full-time enrolled students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2020.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The McCleary solution maintained some inequities and increased others. There has been a disproportionate impact on the smallest districts in the state. Over two-thirds of districts have 2000 or fewer students. This bill reintroduces a small school factor into LEA, which would provide a minor, targeted fix and would go a long way to mitigate concerns. The committee could consider expanding this to districts with up to 500 students.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Annette Cleveland, Prime Sponsor; Dan Steele, Washington Association of School Administrators; Melissa Gombosky, ESD 112 and ESD 105 Schools; Michelle Matakas, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Gene Sementi, West Valley School District.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.