

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2398

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Education

**Title:** An act relating to requiring parent representation on instructional materials committees.

**Brief Description:** Requiring parent representation on instructional materials committees.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Walsh, Couture, Eslick and Jacobsen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 1/23/24, 1/30/24 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires school district instructional materials committees (IMCs) to include one or more parents of students, with the parent members equaling less than one-half of the total membership of the IMC.
- Includes an exemption to the parent members requirement for school districts with fewer than 2,000 students that are unable to recruit parents to serve on an IMC.
- Requires school districts to ensure equitable opportunity for participation on IMCs by parents of enrolled students that reflect the demographics and learning needs in the district.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Rude, Ranking Minority Member; McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Couture, Eslick, Harris, McClintock, Nance, Steele, Stonier and Timmons.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Ortiz-Self and Pollet.

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

**Background:**

School district boards of directors (school boards) must have policies for the selection and deletion of instructional materials. The policies must comply with specified requirements, including:

- stating the school district's goals and principles relative to instructional materials;
- delegating responsibility for the preparation and recommendation of teachers' reading lists and specifying the procedures to be followed in the selection of all instructional materials;
- establishing an instructional materials committee (IMC) to be appointed, with the approval of the school board, by the school district's chief administrative officer. Each IMC must consist of members of the school district's professional staff and may include parents at the school board's discretion, provided the number of parent members on an IMC is less than one half of its total membership; and
- providing a system for receiving, considering, and acting upon written complaints regarding instructional materials used by the school district.

Recommendation of instructional materials are to be made by the IMC in accordance with school district policy, but final approval or disapproval decisions must be made by the school district board of directors.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

School district instructional materials committees (IMCs) must include one or more parents of students, with the parent members equaling less than one-half of the total membership of the IMC. An exemption to the parent members requirement is included for school districts with fewer than 2,000 enrolled students that are unable to recruit parents to serve on an IMC.

School districts must ensure equitable opportunity for participation on IMCs by parents of enrolled students that reflect the demographics and learning needs in the district.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

As compared to the original bill, the substitute bill:

- requires school district instructional materials committees (IMCs), subject to certain limits, to include at least one parent, rather than multiple parents;
- requires school districts to ensure equitable opportunity for participation on IMCs by parents of enrolled students that reflect the demographics and learning needs in the

- district; and
  - makes corresponding technical changes to align exemption language for school districts with fewer than 2,000 enrolled students with the requirements for equitable opportunities for participation in IMCs.
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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill changes a "may have" to a "must have," regarding parental involvement in instructional materials committees (IMCs) and includes a reasonable carve out for small school districts. The hope is that the bill will engage parents and diffuse the frustration of some parents who may feel as though their voices are not being heard. The hope is also that it will challenge parents to become involved and that it will make education better.

This bill is a no-brainer—it seems natural that parents serve on IMCs. This bill was probably brought forward because of local issues.

This bill will be good for the state. More than 40,000 students have left public education in recent years. This bill will send a signal that parent involvement is important.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) School boards, rather than school district administrators, should have greater control over the composition of IMCs. Parents are structured to be the minority on IMCs and can be voted down by the other members.

The composition of IMCs should be controlled at the local level.

A variety of options for IMC participation is preferred. The exemption in the bill should be extended to large districts.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Jim Walsh, prime sponsor; Liv Finne, Washington Policy Center; Sharon Damoff; and Jennifer Heine-Withee.

(Other) Andy Cilley; Marissa Rathbone, Washington State School Directors' Association; and Nasue Nishida, Washington Education Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** Julie Barrett, Conservative Ladies of Washington .