

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6879

As Passed House:

March 5, 2008

Title: An act relating to the joint task force on basic education finance.

Brief Description: Regarding the joint task force on basic education finance.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Tom, McDermott and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/26/08 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/5/08, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires a report from the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance (Task Force) by December 1, 2008.
- Requires the Task Force to consider issues related to salary equalization across school districts.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, Liias, Roach, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

In 2007, the Legislature created the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance (Task Force), which is required to review the definition of basic education and the current basic

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education funding formulas, develop options for a new funding structure and all necessary formulas, and propose a new definition of basic education.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy supports the Task Force and is required to provide three reports to the Task Force:

- (1) an initial report by September 15, 2007, proposing a plan of action, reporting dates, and timelines;
- (2) a second report by December 1, 2007, with at least two but not more than four options for allocating school employee compensation; and
- (3) a final report by September 15, 2008, with at least two but no more than four options for revising the remaining K-12 funding structure, a timeline for phasing in the full adoption of the new funding structure, and a projection of the expected effect of investments made under the new funding structure.

There is no date provided for the completion of the work of the Task Force and no requirement for a report from the Task Force to the Legislature.

In November 2007 the King County Superior Court ruled against the state in a case challenging the state's system of allocating funds to school districts for salaries of teachers, administrators, and classified staff. The state has appealed the decision.

Summary of Bill:

The Basic Education Finance Task Force must report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2008, regarding the information it is required to review. In addition to other topics already specified, the Task Force must consider issues related to salary equalization among school districts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Task Force is a follow-up to Washington Learns, which was not able to accomplish all that was intended. The issue of full funding for basic education is critical. It is important for the Task Force to have a final deadline and report in order to finish the job.
(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Mitch Denning, Alliance of Educational Associations; and Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.