

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1879

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the delivery of educational services to children who are deaf and hearing impaired.

Brief Description: Providing for the delivery of educational services to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Jacks, Kagi, Moeller, Orcutt, Wallace, Appleton and Kenney).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Children's Services: 2/10/09, 2/13/09 [DPS];

Education Appropriations: 2/25/09, 2/26/09 [DP2S(w/o sub ELCS)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/10/09, 96-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/9/09, 46-0.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 4/20/09, 92-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss to provide statewide leadership in the regional delivery of education services to students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Requires development of a plan for the implementation of two demonstration projects for regionally-based deaf education programs providing services in the full range of communication modalities.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking

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Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Goodman and Seaquist.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Sullivan, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Carlyle, Cox, Haler, Hunter, Kagi, Probst, Quall, Rolfes and Wallace.

Staff: Wendy Polzin (786-7137)

Background:

The Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) traces its history back to 1886 when the first facility was established in Vancouver, Clark County, by then territorial Governor, Watson Squire. In 1888 the original property was exchanged for the site where the WSD sits today. In 1906 the WSD became officially known as the State School for the Deaf and Blind. Seven years later, in 1913, the schools were separated to create the Washington School for the Deaf and the Washington State School for the Blind. Much of the current statutory framework for operation of the WSD has remained relatively unchanged since 1985.

In 2002 the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) examined various models of deaf education and service delivery. In 2006 the Institute studied issues relating to the governance and operation of the WSD. Following that study, the Legislature appropriated \$55,000 to the Institute for the purpose of contracting with a facilitator to conduct a series of meetings with stakeholders to discuss strengths and weaknesses of educational services available statewide to children who are deaf or hearing impaired.

In June 2007 the Institute published its report recommending that a single state agency be charged with overseeing the quality and outcomes of local, regional, and statewide schools and programs serving students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind. These recommendations represented a consensus of stakeholders.

Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:

The Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss (Center) is established. The WSD in Vancouver will remain as part of the Center. The currently appointed Superintendent of the WSD will become the Director of the Center and the WSD Board of Trustees will become the Governing Board for the Center. The governance structure of the Center will be the same as it is for the WSD.

The Center's primary functions will be to:

1. provide statewide leadership and support for coordination of regionally-delivered deaf education services in the full range of communication modalities;

2. manage and supervise the WSD; and
3. collaborate with public and private partners in developing an applied research center for training and professional development for educators serving children who are deaf or hearing impaired.

The powers and duties of the Director of the Center include all powers and duties currently defined for the Superintendent of the WSD, plus the following additional duties:

1. providing technical assistance and administrative support to educational service districts for the regional delivery of services to students who are deaf or hearing impaired; and
2. providing technical assistance and support as appropriate to local and regional efforts to build critical mass and communication-rich networking opportunities for children who are deaf or hearing impaired and their families.

The Director and board of trustees of the Center will consult with stakeholders for the purpose of planning the implementation of demonstration programs in two educational service districts (ESDs) for the delivery of education services in the full range of communication modalities to children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Stakeholders will include the OSPI's Washington Sensory Disabilities Services, the DSHS's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, parents of children who are deaf and hard of hearing, adults and students who are deaf or hard of hearing, an ESD superintendent, a school district superintendent, the Department of Health, the Department of Early Learning, and two non-governmental entities.

The Director and board of trustees will select and consult with two ESDs, one of which must be in Eastern Washington. By December 31, 2010, the board and director will report to the Legislature and the Governor with recommendations for the implementation and operation of the demonstration sites.

The term "School for the Deaf" is replaced with "Washington State Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss" in numerous statutes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & Children's Services):

(In support) This bill is the result of several years of work by stakeholders to refine it and to recognize multiple interests in expanding the service delivery area of the WSD. This is the third time this bill has been heard and it is too good a bill to fail. The Washington School for the Deaf has so much to offer the rest of the state in partnerships and technical assistance and this bill will be the vehicle to promote ways to better meet the needs of more deaf children across the state. The fiscal note is minimal and only for a year to support the focused short-term work of the Panel. Allowing the Panel to do the work needed for the regional demonstration sites will finally begin to address the isolation issues facing many deaf and

hard of hearing students throughout the state. The Washington Federation of State Employees is in full support of this bill and has only one concern relating to the ability to select all the panel members by June 1, 2009.

(Information only) The WSD and the OSPI have started preliminary discussions about how to move forward with this idea and we have already had some interest from the ESD in being one of the demonstration sites.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education Appropriations):

(In support) There are fixed costs associated with creating the Center that will be necessary. Remaining costs are for the temporary committee to meet and plan the demonstration sites. The staff will need to meet, but they could meet less frequently and that could bring costs down. The \$50,000 reflected in the fiscal note is the maximum foreseeable cost, and it will likely be much lower. The greatest advantage to the deaf community because of this bill will be to provide greater services throughout the state. This will make the educational services available around the state to children that do not attend the School for the Deaf. This is the next step in the process to expand services. This may be a way to generate new methods to serve more children in a cost effective way.

(Information only) There are 118 students on campus in Vancouver, and there are 168 students being served around the state, primarily through the use of video technology. There are also school staff that travel out to visit these children. Educational Service Districts are welcoming of this new program. This will set up a broader spectrum of services for children around the state.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & Children's Services): (In support) Representative Jacks, prime sponsor; Lorna Meyers, Washington Federation of State Employees; and Lawrence Peterson.

(Information only) Rick Hauan, Washington School for the Deaf.

Persons Testifying (Education Appropriations): (In support) Representative Jacks, prime sponsor.

(Information only) Rick Hauan, Washington School for the Deaf and Blind.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & Children's Services): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Education Appropriations): None.