

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1224

As Passed House:

March 8, 1995

Title: An act relating to educational waivers.

Brief Description: Authorizing waivers for educational restructuring.

Sponsors: Representatives Brumsickle, Cole, Silver and Carlson; by request of Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/27/95, 2/14/95 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/8/95, 98-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chairman; Elliot, Vice Chairman; Johnson, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Clements; Dickerson; G. Fisher; Hatfield; McMahan; Pelesky; Quall; Radcliff; Smith; Talcott; B. Thomas; Thompson and Veloria.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: In 1987, the Legislature created the Schools for the 21st Century program. The purpose of the program was to enable educators and parents of selected school districts to restructure school operations and develop model school programs that would improve student performance. The program concluded in June 1994.

One of the provisions of the program was the ability of participating schools to get waivers from specified state requirements, including: the length of the school year, teacher contact hour; program hour offerings; student teacher ratios; salary lid compliance; the commingling of categorical funds; and administrative rules.

This concept of waivers was continued in the education reform legislation in 1992 and 1993, and schools may currently receive waivers from the self-study requirement, the teacher-student contact hour requirement, and portions of the program hour offering requirement.

It has been suggested that the list of currently available waivers be expanded to include many of those that were available to Schools for the 21st Century.

Summary of Bill: The State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction may grant waivers to school districts from statutes and rules relating to:

- The length of the school year;
- student-to-teacher ratios;
- the commingling of categorical funds, including, but not limited to, program funds for highly capable students, transitional bilingual instruction, and learning assistance; and
- other administrative rules that may need to be waived in order for a district to implement a school or school district educational restructuring program.

School districts may apply for waivers using the Student Learning Improvement grant application process or the education restructuring plan application process.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will enhance local control. While waivers are not always requested, the bill sends an important message that the state is encouraging flexibility and innovation designed to improve student learning.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Candy Curl, State Board of Education (pro); and Ben Edlund (pro).