

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1941

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the improvement of reading literacy.

Brief Description: Improving student learning by focusing on reading literacy.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Johnson, Brumsickle, Talcott and Thompson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/20/95, 2/28/95 [DPS];
Appropriations: 3/4/95 [DP2S(w/o sub ED)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/15/95, 97-0.
Senate Amended.
House Refused to Concur.
Conference Committee Report Adopted.
Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chairman; Elliot, Vice Chairman; Johnson, Vice Chairman; Clements; Fuhrman; McMahan; Pelesky; Radcliff; Smith; Talcott; B. Thomas and Thompson.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Poulsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson; G. Fisher; Hatfield; Quall and Veloria.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON 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 Education. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Silver, Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Huff, Vice Chairman; Pelesky, Vice Chairman; Beeksma; Brumsickle; Carlson; Crouse; Foreman; Hargrove; Hickel; Lambert; Lisk; McMorris; Reams; Sehlin; Sheahan and Talcott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Valle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chappell; Cooke; G. Fisher; Grant; Jacobsen; Poulsen; Rust; Thibaudeau and Wolfe.

Staff: Jack Daray (786-7178).

Background: Educators, business representatives, parents, and others have concluded that the ability to read with comprehension and skill is essential for success in school and for success in future life. Evidence suggests that it is important to provide reading assistance to students in the early grades if they are to be successful in school.

The Commission on Student Learning is to develop an assessment system to be used in the elementary, middle, and high school grades. The assessments for measuring academic achievement in reading, writing, math, and communication are to be implemented on a voluntary basis during the 1996-97 school year.

Summary of Bill: When developing the elementary grades assessment system, the Commission on Student Learning is to ensure that all students are assessed for reading literacy skills no later than March 31 of the third grade.

The third grade reading assessment shall be made available for voluntary implementation in the 1996-97 school year. Elementary schools are encouraged to implement the assessment in the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. In the 1998-99 school year, the reading assessment is to be given to all public school third graders.

The information provided by the reading assessment is to be used by educators as a tool to evaluate instructional practices and to initiate appropriate educational support for students who have not mastered the essential academic reading requirements for reading. School districts are required to continue to provide appropriate reading support for students who have not mastered the essential learning requirements for reading. The results of the reading assessment shall not be used for school or school district accountability purposes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 15, 1995.

Effective Date of Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (Education) Reading allows one to exceed in all areas of life. By teaching children to read early in their educational career, we will avoid costs for remediation and self-esteem courses. The teaching of reading through the use of phonics is the best instructional approach.

(Appropriations) None.

Testimony Against: (Education) None.

(Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Education) Representative Johnson, prime sponsor (pro); Marian Hinds, Reading Reform Foundation (pro); Lloyd Gardner, citizen (pro); Walter Ball, Association of Washington School Principals (pro with concerns about timing of assessment); and Terry Bergeson, Commission on Student Learning (pro).

(Appropriations) None.