

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1941

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education
Appropriations

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

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

Sponsors: 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)].

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).

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.

Student Learning Improvement grants are intended to provide time and resources to schools to improve student achievement consistent with four student learning goals. The Learning Assistance program provides funds to school districts to assist K-9 students who are below grade level in basic skill areas.

Summary of Substitute 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 the middle of third grade and at other appropriate grade levels.

The third grade reading assessment shall be implemented state-wide in the 1996-97 school year.

The information provided by the reading assessment is to be used by school districts to improve reading programs to meet identified student needs, and to identify students who are reading below state reading standards. School districts shall provide reading assistance to students who are identified in the assessment as reading below state standards. The type of assistance to be provided shall be determined by schools and school districts.

Students not meeting state reading standards shall be placed in a concentrated reading program and will attain the required reading standard before entering the fourth grade.

Districts shall annually reassess students who have not achieved state reading standards. Districts shall continue to provide appropriate reading assistance until students meet or exceed state standards.

Elementary schools that receive Student Learning Improvement grants are required to take actions prior to the 1996-97 school year designed to ensure that students meet or exceed the essential academic learning requirements.

School districts receiving funds from the Learning Assistance program, also known as the LAP program, are required to place special emphasis on addressing the reading skills of students in the early grades.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: A provision was added that requires a student to pass the third grade reading assessment prior to entering fourth grade.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 15, 1995.

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

Testimony For: 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.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: 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).

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).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Education: Requirements were added that the bill be specifically funded in the budget; if not funded, it becomes null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 15, 1995.

Effective Date 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: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.