

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2494

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to including kindergarten in the approval of private schools.

Brief Description: Amending the duty of the state board of education to approve private schools to include kindergarten.

Sponsors: Representatives Poulsen, Brumsickle and Carlson; by request of Board of Education.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/23/96, 1/26/96 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/6/96, 96-0.

Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chairman; Elliot, Vice Chairman; Johnson, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clements; Fuhrman; Hatfield; Linville; McMahan; Pelesky; Poulsen; Quall; Radcliff; Smith; Talcott; B. Thomas; Thompson and Veloria.

Staff: Cheri Keller (786-7093).

Background: Currently, the state Board of Education sets standards and procedures for approving private schools. The state board can approve any private school meeting the standards that carries out a program for any or all grades one through 12. The approval process does not extend to kindergarten or pre-kindergarten programs.

The Department of Social and Health Services licenses child day care centers. Licenses are granted to facilities regularly providing care for a group of children for periods of less than 24 hours. Schools that are engaged primarily in education are not required to obtain a day care license.

Summary of Bill: In addition to its current authority to approve private school programs in grades one through 12, the state Board of Education may approve kindergarten programs in private schools.

No private school may be approved that operates a kindergarten program only.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 1996.

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

Testimony For: Many approved private school have kindergarten programs. Kindergarten programs in public schools are under the state Board of Education's purview. This bill would simply bring our approved private schools into the same relationship and would eliminate any questions about whether approved private schools with kindergartens must get approval for their kindergarten programs from the Department of Social and Health Services.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Steven Dinger, Washington Federation of Independent Schools; and Larry Davis, state Board of Education.