

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 1941

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, March 31, 1995

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

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

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

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 3/23/95, 3/31/95 [DPA].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pelz, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Gaspard, Hochstatter, Johnson and Rasmussen.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** To improve student achievement, the Commission on Student Learning is to identify essential academic learning requirements based on the four student learning goals adopted by the Legislature in 1993. Goal one requires school districts to provide opportunities for all students to develop the knowledge and skills to read with comprehension, write with skill, and communicate effectively.

The commission must also develop an assessment system for the elementary, middle, and high school grades to determine if each student has mastered the essential academic learning requirements. School districts may use the assessments developed for reading, writing, communication, and math beginning in the 1996-97 school year. All school districts must use all of the assessments developed by the commission beginning in the 2000-2001 school year.

Other actions taken by the Legislature to improve student achievement include providing student learning improvement grants for the 1994-96 school years for planning activities and staff development; and providing for the Learning Assistance Program to enhance educational opportunities for public school students in grades K-9 who are deficient in basic skills achievement.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The elementary grades assessment developed by the Commission on Student Learning must assess students' reading literacy skills by the spring of third grade, and at other appropriate grade levels.

School districts must use the results of the reading assessment to evaluate their instructional practices, and to provide appropriate support for students who have not mastered the reading requirements. Districts must provide reading assistance to students who are identified by the assessment as reading below the state standards. The type of assistance provided to those students is determined by schools and school districts.

A pilot program is established to provide an extra day under the Student Learning Improvement Grants for elementary schools in a small, medium and large school district to encourage use of the assessment. The districts participating in the pilot program must report the results of their participation to the Commission on Student Learning. The commission must include the results in its report to the Joint Select Committee on Education Restructuring and the Legislature.

The bill is null and void if it is not funded in the budget.

**Amended Bill Compared to Second Substitute Bill:** The elementary grades assessment developed by the Commission on Student Learning must test students' reading literacy by the spring of third grade, instead of by the middle of third grade.

A pilot program is established to provide an extra day under the Student Learning Improvement Grants for elementary schools in a small, medium and large school district to encourage use of the assessment, instead of mandating the use of the assessment by all districts. The districts participating in the pilot program must report the results of their participation.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** A student must have good reading skills by fourth grade to be able to achieve in other academic subjects. This will help ensure reading skills are learned. There is some concern with changing the implementation schedule for the assessments. This change could be positive if used to focus on reading. Success will require adequate funding but there are no assurances that adequate resources will be available.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Terry Bergeson, CSL; Judy Hartmann, WEA; Sandy Elliot.