

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 2909

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 23, 1996

Title: An act relating to improving reading literacy.

Brief Description: Improving reading literacy.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Johnson, Brumsickle, Cole, Talcott, Quall, Radcliff, McMahan, Hymes, Smith, Lambert, Thompson, Hatfield, Stevens, Boldt, Koster, McMorris, Elliot, Silver, Pelesky, Clements, Cooke, Benton, Carrell, Sheldon, Basich, Linville, Skinner, Robertson, Blanton, Huff, Hickel, Goldsmith, Campbell and Casada).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/16/96, 2/23/96 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

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

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Background: A House Subcommittee on Reading Literacy met six times during the 1995 interim to develop recommendations to improve reading literacy. The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning in the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is responsible for collecting and providing information that will help students in learning the essential academic learning requirements.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, or its designee, develops and implements a process to identify programs that have been proven to be effective, using valid research, in teaching elementary students to read.

The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, or its designee, consults with primary education teachers, statewide reading organizations, institutions of higher education, the Commission on Student Learning, legislators, parents, and other appropriate individuals and organizations when identifying effective reading programs. Criteria are established for identifying effective programs including whether the program helps the student meet the learning requirements for reading.

A grant program is established to train elementary educators to use the classroom-based assessments to assess how students are reading and to improve instruction. When approved, the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction establishes a grant program to provide incentives to use the identified programs. Schools, school districts, and educational service

districts may apply for the grants, which are to be used for in-service training and instructional material. Priority is to be given to schools and school districts that have the lowest reading scores. Grants are to be awarded during the 1997-99 biennium. The grant programs are null and void if not funded in the budget.

After effective programs have been identified, the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning must share the information with appropriate persons. The center is required to develop and implement strategies to improve reading instruction, emphasizing instruction of reading in the primary grades using the identified effective programs.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The term scientific is deleted.

The expiration date for the identification of effective reading programs is deleted. The Legislative Budget Committee is not required to evaluate the effectiveness of the identification process and the Legislature is not required to review the list. The timeline for initial identification is changed from December 15, 1996, to May 1, 1997.

A criteria for selecting programs is added. The programs must be consistent with the essential academic learning requirements.

A grant program is added to train educators in the primary grades to use classroom-based assessments to assess how students are ready.

The grants for using effective programs start in the 1997-99 biennium.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately. Section 2 of the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: The cost of illiteracy is staggering. Reading is the most fundamental skill. Districts need help in choosing effective programs. Distributing information about effective programs is an appropriate role for the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning. The grants are important. Concerns were expressed about a review by the Legislative Budget Committee and the Legislature.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Johnson, prime sponsor; Roberta May, State Board of Education; Leo Francis, Read Right Systems; Julie Rubright, reading specialist; Judy Hartmann, WEA; Terry Bergeson, CSL.