

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1777

As Passed House

April 7, 1997

Title: An act relating to modifying the timelines for development and implementation of the student assessment system.

Brief Description: Changing the timelines for development and implementation of the student assessment system.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Huff, H. Sommers, Alexander, Benson, Clements, Wensman and O'Brien; by request of Office of Financial Management).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/27/97, 2/28/97 [DPS];

Appropriations: 3/8/97 [DP2S(w/o sub ED)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/7/97, 51-44.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Johnson, Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Smith; Sterk; Sump and Talcott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Linville; Quall and Veloria.

Staff: Pat Shelledy (786-7149).

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 28 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman;

Clements, Vice Chairman; Wensman, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gombosky, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson; Carlson; Chopp; Cody; Cooke; Crouse; Grant; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Lisk; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Poulsen; Regala; D. Schmidt; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Tokuda.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Keiser and Linville.

Staff: Elissa Benson (786-7191).

Background: Under the state constitution, the state has a paramount duty to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. The court has interpreted this provision to require the state to define basic education and fully fund it in a general and uniform manner. The definition of basic education consists of program requirements and funding requirements. The program requirement component requires school districts to offer students at various grade levels a certain number of hours in various classes and skills. For example, each school district must offer students in grades one through three at least a total program hour offering of 2700 hours. A minimum of those hours must be devoted to basic skills such as reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, music, art, health, and physical education. Basic education is considered to be fully funded with money appropriated by the Legislature to fund those program requirements.

In 1993, the Legislature passed an education reform act. The act is intended to replace the current definition of the program component of basic education with a system that emphasizes performance based education, assessment, and accountability. Under the new system, school districts must still make a certain number of instructional hours available, but the instruction is focused on mastery of essential academic learning requirements– based on four goals of basic education:

- Goal 1:** Reading, writing, communication;
- Goal 2:** Mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics; history; geography; arts; and health and fitness;
- Goal 3:** Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate experience and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems;
- Goal 4:** Understand the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

The Washington Commission on Student Learning (CSL) was assigned the tasks of developing the essential academic learning requirements and developing a student assessment system. The CSL has adopted the essential academic learning requirements for Goals 1 and 2. Goals 3 and 4 are integrated into the essential

academic learning requirements for Goals 1 and 2. The assessments must integrate knowledge and skill areas to the maximum extent possible.

The elementary, middle and high school level assessments for Goal 1 (reading, writing, and communication), and mathematics (Goal 2) must be available for voluntary use by the 1996-97 school year. The elementary, middle, and high school level assessments developed for Goals 2 (the sciences, history, geography, civics, health/fitness and the arts), 3 (critical thinking) and 4 (understanding the importance of work) must be available for voluntary use by the 1998-99 school year. The CSL is behind in developing the assessments. Before 2000-2001, school districts may participate in the assessments on a voluntary basis. After that, participation in the assessment system is mandatory.

The CSL must also recommend a statewide accountability system to monitor and evaluate the level of learning occurring in individual schools and school districts. The accountability system must be designed to recognize the characteristics of the student population of schools and school districts such as gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other factors. This recommendation is due by June 30, 1999, before the state converts to the provisions of the Education Reform Act.

The CSL must also make recommendations regarding a system to assist schools and school districts that are having difficulty helping students meet the essential academic learning requirements. The accountability and assistance programs are to begin September 1, 2000.

The conversion under the Education Reform Act will take effect September 1, 2000, unless the Legislature passes a law that states that the school accountability and academic assessment system is not in place.

After the State Board of Education (SBE) has determined that the high school assessment system has been implemented and that it is sufficiently reliable, successful completion of the high school assessment leads to a certificate of mastery. It is anticipated that most students will obtain the certificate of mastery by age 16. The certificate of mastery is evidence that the student has mastered the essential academic learning requirements. The certificate of mastery will be required to graduate. The CSL must make recommendations to the SBE regarding the relationship between the certificate of mastery and other high school graduation requirements. When a student obtains the certificate of mastery, the school must make additional education opportunities available to the student that emphasize integration of academic and vocational education. There is not a specific deadline for implementing the certificate of mastery.

Summary of Bill: The timelines for the availability of the assessments are modified.

Reading, writing, communications, and mathematics (Goal 1 and Mathematics of Goal 2): The elementary assessments must be available as under current law by the 1996-97 school year; the middle school assessments must be available by the 1997-98 school year; and high school assessments by the 1998-99 school year. The elementary assessment is optional until the 1997-98 school year. The middle and high school assessment is optional until the 2000-01 school year.

Science (Goal 2): The science assessment for middle and high school levels must be available by the 1998-99 school year. Participation in the science assessment for middle and high school students is optional until the 2000-01 school year. The science assessment for elementary school students must be available by the 2001-02 school year. Participation in the elementary assessment science assessment is mandatory in the third year after it becomes available.

For middle and school high school levels, the history, civics, arts, and geography assessments must be available by the 2000-01 school year and the health and fitness assessments by the 2001-02 school year. All school districts must participate in those assessments in the third year after they become available. By December 15, 1998, the CSL must recommend to the legislature revised timelines for implementing these assessments and the elementary science assessment.

Specific reference to assessments measuring Goals 3 and 4 is deleted but a provision is added that assessments for Goals 3 and 4 must be integrated into the essential academic learning requirements and assessments for Goals 1 and 2.

The superintendent of public instruction (SPI) will assume responsibility for developing assessments that have not been developed by June 30, 1999 and the CSL will expire on that date. The CSL or the SPI must provide opportunities for the education committees of the house and the senate to review the assessments and proposed modifications to the essential academic learning requirements before the modifications are adopted.

The deadline of June 30, 1999 for the CSL to report to the Legislature about the statewide accountability system is replaced with a requirement that the CSL make recommendations for an accountability system by November 1, 1997, for reading in grades K-4 and by June 30, 1999, for the remaining subjects and grades by June 30, 1999. The requirement that school assistance programs be in place by September 1, 2000, is deleted.

The accountability system criteria are changed. The accountability system must assess each school individually against its own baseline, schools with similar characteristics, and schools statewide.

By September 30, 1997, the CSL, SBE, and SPI must jointly make recommendations to the education committees regarding the high school assessments, the certificate of mastery, and high school graduation requirements. In preparing those recommendations, a number of questions must be asked.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 3, 1997.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: (Education) The CSL is not in compliance with the original timelines for implementing the assessments, and those timelines need to be adjusted. The Legislature needs to strengthen its advisory and review role of this process before it is fully implemented. Reference to the certificate of mastery should be deleted because it was never defined in the statute when education reform was passed. No one knows what it means, and no one is sure what are the implications of it for our students who will want to obtain jobs and gain entrance into institutions of higher education. The assessments for Goals 3 and 4 have been integrated into the assessments for Goals 1 and 2 and do not need a separate reference.

(Appropriations) (To striking amendment not adopted) It is important to stay the course of education reform. The underlying bill maintains the course while making adjustments to the timing of the availability of the assessments.

Testimony Against: (Education) Removing the deadlines for the social science goals of Goal 2 may create the impression that meeting those goals is not as important as meeting the other goals and may result in the assessments not being completed. The assessments for those goals should not be optional. The assessments are a critical part of the accountability system under the Education Reform Act. It appears under the draft that the assessments for Goals 3 and 4 have been eliminated. Goals 3 and 4 are part of the Basic Education Act under education reform and must be met just like any other goal.

(Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Education) Representatives Hickel and Talcott (support); Marlene Holster, Commission on Student Learning (support substitute with concerns); Robert Butts, Superintendent of Public Instruction (support substitute with concerns); Steve Mullein, Washington Roundtable (concerns with substitute); Michael Hackman, teacher (opposed); and Joseph Pension and Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board, (con).

(Appropriations) Robert Butts, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (pro with concerns); and Marlene Holyater, CSL (pro).