

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2333

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 27, 1998

Title: An act relating to student transportation.

Brief Description: Allowing school districts to allow students funded at basic transportation rates to use school transportation that qualifies for special transportation rates.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Hickel, Johnson and B. Thomas).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/27/98 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: William Bridges (786-7424)

Background: Local school boards must operate local transportation programs for their districts' students. Boards may determine which students will be transported and what routes will be used. State funds for transportation must be spent for that purpose but districts may decide how to spend the funds.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) determines the allocation of state pupil transportation funds. Under SPI's current system, basic education students are funded at an annual average rate of \$295 per student, while special education students are funded at an annual average of \$2000 per student. SPI also monitors the use of state transportation funds to ensure that the funds are spent for their intended purpose. Accordingly, SPI has adopted reporting requirements that are intended to prevent school districts from over-reporting the transportation of special education students. For example, districts that commingle basic and special education students on the same bus will only be funded at the basic student rate. To avoid this result, some districts transport their basic education and special education students on different buses.

Summary of Bill: A school district may transport basic education and special education students on the same bus (or other transportation) while continuing to collect the higher rate for the special education students.

If districts exercise this authority, they must give seating priority to students that qualify for special transportation funding. In addition, districts that exercise this authority continue to

receive funding at special transportation rates for students who qualify for special rates and funding at basic transportation rates for students who qualify for basic rates.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: "Drive by transportation" will be stopped. It makes sense to have basic and special education students riding together. School districts are allowed to operate more efficiently by reducing the number of hours for bus drivers.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Hickel, prime sponsor; Jean Ameluxen, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Doug Nelson, Public School Employees; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association.