
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5508

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Hochstatter, Oke, Morton, Swecker, Finkbeiner, Horn, Stevens and Schow)

Read first time 02/20/97.

1 AN ACT Relating to reading accountability; amending RCW
2 28A.230.190; adding a new chapter to Title 28A RCW; and making
3 appropriations.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that it is essential
6 for children in the public schools to read well early in elementary
7 school. The legislature further finds that a clear and visible goal,
8 assessments to determine the reading level at each building,
9 measurements of annual building improvement, and creating
10 accountability in each level of the educational system will result in
11 a significant increase in the number of children reading at or above
12 grade level.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** This act may be known and cited as the third
14 grade reading accountability act.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The definitions in this section apply
16 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

1 (1) "Actual percentage" means the head count enrollment of third
2 grade students reading at or above third grade level divided by the
3 head count enrollment of third grade students in the building on the
4 date the state-wide third grade reading assessment is administered.

5 (2) "Adjusted percentage" means the actual percentage minus those
6 students who were not in the district at least one-half of each of the
7 student's second and third grade years, and minus those students who
8 have been enrolled in a bilingual program for two or fewer years from
9 both the numerator and denominator.

10 (3) "At or above third grade level" means at or above the grade
11 level equivalent for the month that the third grade reading assessment
12 defined in subsection (8) of this section is administered.

13 (4) "Building baseline" means the building's actual percentage in
14 the spring of 1998.

15 (5) "Equal annual incremental improvement" is one-fourth of the
16 improvement necessary to progress from the building baseline to the
17 reading goal by the spring of 2002 and is calculated by taking the
18 state goal of ninety percent less the building baseline divided by
19 four.

20 (6) "Factored equal annual incremental improvement" means the state
21 goal of ninety percent less the building's adjusted percentage in the
22 spring of 1998 divided by four.

23 (7) "Reading goal" means ninety percent of a public elementary
24 school building's annual head count enrollment of third grade students
25 reading at or above grade level as measured by the state-wide third
26 grade reading assessment.

27 (8) "Third grade reading assessment" means the reading portion of
28 the third grade California test of basic skills or the reading subtest
29 of such other standardized achievement test given annually to all
30 students in grade three under RCW 28A.230.190.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The reading goal of chapter . . . , Laws of
32 1997 (this act) is: By the year 2002, and each year thereafter, ninety
33 percent or more of all Washington public school third graders reading
34 at or above grade level, as defined by the commission on student
35 learning, by the end of their third grade.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** To achieve the state reading goal:

1 (1) Each school district shall use classroom-based assessments to
2 evaluate the reading level of its kindergarten, first, and second
3 graders annually for purposes of intervention and remediation
4 commencing in the spring of 1998. Each school district shall assess
5 the reading level of its third graders in the spring of 1998 and each
6 year thereafter using the third grade reading assessment for the
7 primary purpose of system accountability and not primarily for the
8 purpose of remediation commencing at grade four;

9 (2) Each elementary school shall determine its building baseline,
10 which shall be its actual percentage of students reading at or above
11 third grade level as determined by the third grade reading assessment
12 administered in the spring of 1998; and

13 (3) Each public elementary school building is expected to make
14 equal annual incremental improvement from its baseline. Equal annual
15 incremental improvement is one-fourth of the reading improvement
16 necessary to progress from the building baseline in the spring of 1998
17 to the state reading goal of ninety percent in the spring of 2002 and
18 shall be calculated and measured on a building-by-building basis. The
19 percentage of required improvement will be different for different
20 public schools since it is based on the individual building baselines.
21 For financial accountability purposes only, the required improvement
22 shall not exceed twelve percent annually.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The seven levels of system accountability
24 necessary to achieve the reading goal shall be the parents, the state,
25 the professional associations, the principals, the teachers, the public
26 school buildings, and the school district.

27 (1) Parents are a child's first and most influential teacher.
28 Public school districts shall encourage and support parents to read
29 with their children at least twenty minutes a day from birth through
30 third grade.

31 (2) The superintendent of public instruction or the
32 superintendent's designee shall:

33 (a) Report annually to the senate and the house of representatives
34 education committees on the state-wide progress toward the reading
35 goal;

36 (b) Provide progress reports on the state-wide third grade reading
37 assessment scores to the public in clear, understandable terms on a

1 building, district, and state-wide basis, and by reference to fixed
2 standards at each grade level;

3 (c) Encourage buildings to develop a repertoire of instructional
4 approaches tailored to different student learning styles;

5 (d) Provide information to public schools and school districts
6 regarding organizational and instructional practices of representative
7 buildings that are making or exceeding the equal annual incremental
8 improvement toward the reading goal;

9 (e) Evaluate and make available a variety of suitable classroom-
10 based assessments required in section 5 of this act that school
11 districts may use to assess the reading level of their kindergarten,
12 first, second, and third graders annually; and

13 (f) Not adopt a specific instructional approach. The standard for
14 instruction in this area shall be what works.

15 (3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
16 coordinate the activities of relevant professional associations. It
17 shall:

18 (a) Meet and confer with each relevant professional association
19 regarding voluntary alignment of association resources to support the
20 achievement of the reading goal;

21 (b) Report annually to the senate and the house of representatives
22 education committees on the efforts of professional associations to
23 support the achievement of the reading goal; and

24 (c) Meet and confer with the commission on student learning to
25 assure consistent approaches.

26 (4) Each public elementary school principal has the primary
27 responsibility within the building for providing leadership in reaching
28 the reading goal. An increasing portion of each public elementary
29 school principal's annual evaluation should result from each school
30 district's professional appraisal of effective leadership in this area.

31 (5) Each third grade teacher shall annually report to the parent or
32 guardian the reading level of the parent's child as measured by the
33 reading assessment commencing June 1998 and each year thereafter. The
34 report shall reference grade level and monthly increments.

35 (6) Each public elementary school shall annually report to its
36 community the number, the actual percentage, and the adjusted
37 percentage of third grade students reading at or above third grade
38 level and the distribution and range of all reading scores by grade and

1 monthly increments on the third grade reading assessment required under
2 section 5 of this act.

3 (7) Each district shall report to the superintendent of public
4 instruction annually beginning October 1998 the number, the actual
5 percentage, and the adjusted percentage of third grade students reading
6 at or above third grade level on the third grade reading assessment
7 required under section 5 of this act.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Consistent with chapter 28A.630 RCW,
9 districts shall receive rewards for achievement and assistance for
10 deficiency of factored equal annual incremental improvement. Financial
11 rewards under this section are intended to engage the districts and
12 shall not be linked to either the principal or the elementary school
13 building.

14 (1) Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, each school district
15 shall annually receive an additional four thousand dollars for each
16 elementary building achieving the lesser of factored equal annual
17 incremental improvement or twelve percent per year.

18 (2) Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, each school district
19 shall annually receive an additional two thousand dollars for each
20 elementary building achieving the lesser of one-half of factored equal
21 annual incremental improvement or six percent per year.

22 (3) Payments under subsection (1) or (2) of this section are due if
23 a building qualifies either on an annual basis or on a cumulative year
24 basis. Payment under subsection (1) of this section shall continue to
25 school districts with buildings that achieve and continue to maintain
26 the reading goal.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** The superintendent of public instruction
28 shall adopt rules to prorate the amount paid under section 7 of this
29 act for elementary buildings with a third grade full-time equivalent
30 enrollment of fewer than seventy-five students.

31 **Sec. 9.** RCW 28A.230.190 and 1990 c 101 s 6 are each amended to
32 read as follows:

33 (1) Every school district is encouraged to test pupils in grade two
34 by an assessment device designed or selected by the school district.
35 This test shall be used to help teachers in identifying those pupils in
36 need of assistance in the skills of reading, writing, mathematics, and

1 language arts. The test results are not to be compiled by the
2 superintendent of public instruction, but are only to be used by the
3 local school district.

4 (2) The superintendent of public instruction shall prepare and
5 conduct with the assistance of school districts, a standardized
6 achievement test to be given annually to all students in grade three.
7 The test shall only assess students' skills in reading. Results of the
8 test shall be available before May 15th of each year to all local
9 school districts and to parents of the students tested.

10 (3) The superintendent of public instruction shall prepare and
11 conduct, with the assistance of school districts, a standardized
12 achievement test to be given annually to all pupils in grade four. The
13 test shall assess students' skill in reading, mathematics, and language
14 arts and shall focus upon appropriate input variables. Results of such
15 tests shall be compiled by the superintendent of public instruction,
16 who shall make those results available annually to the legislature, to
17 all local school districts and subsequently to parents of those
18 children tested. The results shall allow parents to ascertain the
19 achievement levels and input variables of their children as compared
20 with the other students within the district, the state and, if
21 applicable, the nation.

22 (~~(+3)~~) (4) The superintendent of public instruction shall report
23 annually to the legislature on the achievement levels of students in
24 grade four.

25 NEW SECTION. Sec. 10. This chapter does not provide a cause of
26 legal action for damages or specific performance.

27 NEW SECTION. Sec. 11. Sections 1 through 8 and 10 of this act
28 constitute a new chapter in Title 28A RCW.

29 NEW SECTION. Sec. 12. (1) The sum of five hundred thousand
30 dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for
31 the fiscal year ending June 30, 1998, from the general fund to the
32 superintendent of public instruction for the purposes of this act.

33 (2) The sum of five hundred thousand dollars, or as much thereof as
34 may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30,
35 1999, from the general fund to the superintendent of public instruction
36 for the purposes of this act.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** If any provision of this act or its
2 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
3 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
4 persons or circumstances is not affected.

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