

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2761

Title: An act relating to creating a K-12 accountability and information system.

Brief Description: Requiring a K-12 accountability and information system.

Sponsors: Representatives Cox, Rockefeller, Talcott, Santos, Miloscia and Haigh.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: January 27, 2000

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background: By law, as part of the state's educational accountability system, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must report annually to schools, school districts, and the legislature on how students performed on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning and state required norm-referenced tests. The reports must include information on the different characteristics of schools, including factors such as dropout rates and student mobility. Schools are also required to report annually to parents and members of the local community. School performance reports, also called school report cards, include a wide range of information, including information on student attendance, graduation, and dropout rates.

Since the early 1990's, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been collecting data on student dropout rates. The office has been unable to verify the reliability of the data due to an inability to locate students who transfer among school districts. The office has also attempted to collect information on student mobility, but questions have been raised about the comprehensiveness and reliability of the information. The questions may be due, in part, to the fact that the school districts have not yet adopted a common definition of mobility or attendance.

In the 1995-97 biennial budget, OSPI received \$1,700,000 to reprogram computer applications for collecting and processing school fiscal, personnel, and student data, and for other purposes. The budget directed the office to provide the legislative fiscal and policy committees with a plan before a new state-wide data system was implemented. The plan was to identify the uses of state data base that might involve potentially sensitive data on students and parents. The plan was also required to identify the methods that the superintendent would use to protect the integrity and proper use of the data collected, with particular attention to the elimination of unnecessary and instructive data about nonschool related information.

The 1997-99 biennial budget directed OSPI, in cooperation with the Commission on Student Learning, to develop a feasibility plan for a state student record system. The system would include information on student academic achievement on the first two goals of the state's education reform efforts. The plan was to be made available to the fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature for approval before a student records database was developed. The plan was to identify data elements to be collected, and safeguards for student confidentiality. It was to also identify the proper use of the data with attention to the elimination of unnecessary and intrusive data about nonacademic information.

Summary: The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) will design and implement a statewide student accountability and information system. The system will provide information to allow the accurate calculation of dropout and graduation rates, student mobility and attendance, academic achievement over time, and other information that measures or contributes to student achievement. The system will, to the extent possible, be integrated with existing information systems to minimize school district administrative time and paperwork. The system will also incorporate safeguards to protect the confidentiality of student information, and will be limited to data required for accountability or fiscal purposes. The system will not include student behavioral or disciplinary information. The system will use a student identification system that does not use social security numbers. The legislature intends that the system be implemented by the beginning of the 2001-02 school year.

The SPI will consult with the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission, school personnel, privacy experts, and others on the design and implementation of the system. By September 1, 2000, the SPI will report on the system to the legislative fiscal and policy committees. The elements of the report are described.

Appropriation: \$200,000 for the 2000 fiscal year and \$800,000 for the 2001 fiscal year is provided to OSPI for this purpose

Fiscal Note: requested

Effective Date: The bill declares an emergency and takes effect immediately