

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5634

As Passed House - Amended:

April 7, 1999

Title: An act relating to the retention and promotion of students.

Brief Description: Requiring school districts to adopt policies for the retention and promotion of students.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Finkbeiner, Zarelli, Hale, Oke, Deccio, Johnson, Hochstatter, Rossi, McDonald, Horn, Swecker and West).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/22/99, 4/1/99 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/7/99, 91-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- By the beginning of 2000-01 school year, all local school boards must have a policy on the promotion and retention of students. School districts with existing policies must amend them if necessary.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Schindler, Republican Vice Chair; Carlson; Cox; Keiser; Rockefeller; Santos; D. Schmidt; Schual-Berke; Stensen and Wensman.

Staff: Charlie Gavigan (786-7340).

Background:

Policies concerning the promotion and retention of students may be adopted by a local school board in its governance role. The Washington State School Directors' Association has drafted sample policies for the promotion and retention of students.

Summary of Amended Bill:

By the beginning of 2000-01 school year, all local school boards must have a policy on the promotion and retention of students. School districts with existing policies must amend them if necessary.

A school district's promotion and retention policy must include the following: (1) notification to parents and guardians when a student is identified as being at risk of retention (the notice must be provided as early in the school year, and as early in the student's school career, as practicable); (2) an opportunity for parents and guardians to consult with teachers who are responsible for the decision to retain or promote; and (3) a description of the remedial opportunities which are available to a student who is recommended to be retained or is at risk of being retained.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Decisions regarding promoting or retaining students are important decisions schools must make. The school district should have a policy on this issue that involves the student, the parents, and the school in addressing problems that may result in students not being promoted to the next grade level. Existing policies should only have to be amended if necessary.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Gary King, Washington Education Association; Mark Huber, teacher; Judy Hartmann, Tacoma Public Schools; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators; Joe Pope, Association of Washington School Principals; and Barbara Casey, Washington State Parent Teacher Association.