
Education Committee

HB 2733

Brief Description: Creating the task force on school funding review.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Cox, Schual-Berke, Jarrett, Hunt, Santos, Rockefeller, Fromhold, Quall, Edwards, Ogden, Morris, Chase, Upthegrove and Linville.

Hearing Date: 2/5/02

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

The state constitution establishes the education of all children as the paramount duty of the state and requires the Legislature to provide for a system of public schools. The constitution is the foundation upon which three school funding decisions made in the 1970s and 80s rested. Those decisions, coupled with subsequent state laws and court decisions, have helped shape the budget formulas used to determine the state support for the public education. In order to meet its paramount duty, the Legislature dedicates almost one-half of the state's general fund monies to support the education of children in the public schools.

The funding system begins with state-supervised school district budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting practices. State resources, supplemented by local and federal monies, are distributed through funding formulas to equalize educational opportunities throughout the state. Basic education and categorical programs are state supported through these formulas. State resources include state general fund revenue, other state revenues, state property taxes, and timber excise taxes.

Every few years, the Legislature revisits various aspects of school funding. The 1998 Legislature directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to study the financing system for the public schools. The study included a review of school district revenue and expenditure practices, resource allocations within selected districts, and available data sources. The study also addressed class size and personnel deployment issues. It was presented to the Legislature in 1999.

Summary of Bill:

The nineteen member Task Force on School Funding Review is created. Of the 19 members, 13 will be citizen members and one will be a representative of the Governor or the

Office of Financial Management, each appointed by the Governor. Four members will be legislators appointed by legislative leadership from each major caucus of the House and Senate and one will be the Superintendent of Public Instruction or the superintendent's designee. The Governor will appoint the chair of the task force. In determining his appointments, the Governor will consider the educational finance expertise of the citizens who apply for task force membership, and will attempt to appoint parents, business and community leaders, and individuals with experience in various facets of education, including special education and programs for students with limited English proficiency.

The task force will identify between 15 and 25 successful comprehensive school or school district program models operating within the state. In its identification process, the task force will place special emphasis on the results of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. After reviewing the structure and operation of the successful program models, the task force will recommend to the Governor and the legislative fiscal and education committees a program to pilot test performance-based funding programs that could be used in the schools and school districts. The pilots should be designed to test either school-based or district-wide performance-based funding systems. By January 1, 2004 the task force will report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the legislative fiscal and education committees. In its final report, the task force will recommend steps for the pilot testing and implementation statewide of a system of performance-based financing for the common schools.

The Office of Financial Management will provide staff support to the task force, and may enter into contracts for any necessary services.

The task force will expire on June 30, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/30/02.

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