

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2190

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 28, 2002

Title: An act relating to permitting children of certificated and classified school employees to enroll at the school where the employee is assigned.

Brief Description: Permitting the children of certificated and classified school employees to enroll at the school where the employee is assigned.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives McDermott, Anderson, Santos, Schmidt, Quall, Ericksen, Kenney, Pearson, Schindler, Keiser, Schual-Berke, Rockefeller, Talcott, Haigh, Bush, O'Brien, Jarrett, Lambert, Kessler, Grant, Mielke and Simpson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/21/02, 2/28/02 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner, Hewitt, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Rasmussen, Regala and Zarelli.

Staff: Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

Background: Under current law, a student must generally attend school in the school district in which he or she lives. This is called the student's resident district. For parents wanting to enroll their child in a different school, there are two different transfers potentially available: (1) intradistrict transfer, from one school to another school in the same district or (2) interdistrict transfer, from a school in one district to a school in a different district.

Washington law allows schools to adopt their own policies governing intradistrict transfers and those policies are published by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Interdistrict transfers are governed, in part, by statute. A school district may make arrangements with any other district to enroll children from that other district and are strongly encouraged to honor a parental request for a transfer. A parent wishing to transfer his or her child to a school in another district must get both a release from the resident district school and an acceptance from the nonresident district. The reasons for release are set out in statute. Schools accepting interdistrict transfers must establish a policy with fair, rational and equitable standards for acceptance or rejection. Possible reasons for rejection are set out in statute. Written notification of approval or rejection of the transfer request is required and parents may appeal the decisions.

Summary of Amended Bill: Unless the enrollment would displace a child that is a resident of the district or school's attendance area or place the school at its enrollment capacity,

school districts are required to allow children of full-time certificated and classified employees to enroll (1) at a school where the employee is assigned; (2) at a school that feeds into the school where the employee is assigned; or (3) at a school in the district's K-12 continuum that includes the school to which the employee is assigned.

For interdistrict transfers, the nonresident school district may also reject a transfer request if the nonresident student (1) has a history of convictions, violent or disruptive behavior, or gang membership or (2) the student has been expelled or suspended from school for more than ten consecutive days.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: School districts are allowed to deny enrollment to a child seeking a transfer under this bill if the enrollment would displace a child that is a resident of the school's district or attendance area or if the enrollment would bring the school to capacity. A reporting requirement regarding the number of students who apply for enrollment and are denied enrollment under this section is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 13, 2002.

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

Testimony For: This is a bill about family values. It allows parents to remain involved and keep in better contact with their children. Parents who work at schools other than where their children attend often are unable to attend their own child's after school functions. High housing costs make it difficult for many teachers to live where they teach.

Testimony Against: We do not need this bill. There are already provisions that would allow school employees to transfer their kids to the school they are working at. This bill would require schools to take in children from other districts that meet the requirements possibly at the expense of a child that is a resident of the district if the school is filled to capacity.

Testified: PRO: Representative Joe McDermott, prime sponsor; Glenn Gorton, PSE; Bob Ellis, Bellevue Education Association; CON: Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.