

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2473

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

Title: An act relating to the governance of the Washington state school for the deaf.

Brief Description: Revising provisions for the governance of the Washington state school for the deaf.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Tokuda, Boldt, Dickerson, Kenney, Ogden, Chase, Dunn, Veloria, McDermott and Fromhold; by request of Governor Locke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/27/02, 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, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Rasmussen, Regala and Zarelli.

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: The Washington State School for the Deaf (WSD) is located in Vancouver, Washington, and serves to educate and train hearing impaired children. Under current law, the WSD is managed by a superintendent appointed by the Governor. Additionally, the WSD has a Board of Trustees, also appointed by the Governor, that includes nine voting members from each of the state's congressional districts (who serve subject to Senate consent) and four nonvoting members. The Board of Trustees serves in an advisory role only, making recommendations to the Legislature and superintendent regarding the development of programs for the hearing impaired and the operation of the WSD.

Summary of Amended Bill: The powers and duties of the WSD Board of Trustees and superintendent are changed. The superintendent must supervise and manage the WSD; however, many of the superintendent's duties require Board of Trustees' approval. The Board of Trustees must provide oversight to the Legislature and Governor of the WSD. Additionally, the Board of Trustees has approval authority over the superintendent's recommended course of study at the WSD and the rules governing the operation of the WSD's residential facilities.

The composition of the board is changed. The board is still comprised of nine voting members, but they do not have to come from each of the state's congressional districts. When making appointments to the board, the Governor is encouraged to consider geographic diversity and is encouraged to appoint members from specified stakeholder groups.

Finally, the board must report every other year to both the Legislature and the Governor regarding the status of the WSD's operations and submit an evaluation of the superintendent to the Governor, and may recommend to the Governor the removal of the superintendent.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: Language regarding the make-up of the board is changed to encourage, rather than require, the Governor to appoint members from the state's different geographical areas and to appoint representatives from specified stakeholder groups. The dates are synchronized regarding the board's requirement to submit a report to the Legislature and the Governor on the status of the school's operations and to submit to the Governor an evaluation of the superintendent (both are biennial reports). The board must oversee the development of a continuous quality improvement plan and must monitor the school's compliance with education civil rights laws. Finally, technical changes are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2002.

Testimony For: The Governor agrees with the sponsors of this bill, and the Senate companion bill, that the Board of Trustees of the WSD should have more direct control over the governance of the school, rather than merely serving in an advisory role.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Kari Burrell, Governor's Office (pro).