

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2748

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 27, 2002

Title: An act relating to monitoring programs for the education of highly capable students.

Brief Description: Requiring monitoring of programs for the education of highly capable students.

Sponsors: Representatives Schual-Berke and Anderson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/25/02, 2/27/02 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Johnson, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Prentice and Regala.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Hochstatter.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: School districts may operate programs for highly capable students who exhibit outstanding cognitive ability, exceptional creativity, or excel in specific academic fields. If a district offers such a program, the district receives categorical state funds to supplement the basic education funding for the students. The 2001-03 operating budget limits the percentage of highly capable students eligible for state funding in each district to 2 percent of the district's full-time equivalent enrollment.

Current state statutes and rules adopted by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) set minimum requirements for the program; however, program design and implementation standards are not specified. Under the OSPI rules, districts must provide an annual report to the OSPI regarding the number of students served by grade level, the ethnicity and gender of the students and the programs provided for the students.

Summary of Bill: Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, at least once every five years, the OSPI must monitor programs for highly capable students, including district outreach efforts and expenditures. The monitoring may be done concurrently with other program reviews conducted by the OSPI. The OSPI may adopt rules addressing the program monitoring.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The highly capable program is not currently part of basic education but highly capable students have special academic needs as much as students at the other end of the academic spectrum. Parents, teachers, and the community need the assurance that in these tight economic times that the state categorical funding for the highly capable program is spent on the program for which it is allocated. The OSPI has a review team that monitors federal programs and which has also looked at the highly capable programs but an auditor has questioned the use of federal funds for the review of the highly capable programs. This bill will give OSPI clear authority to monitor these programs. OSPI is seeking a federal waiver to permit use of federal funds for this purpose. Concerns: The focus of this bill is on regulatory compliance and the focus should be on meeting the academic needs of the students.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Shual-Berke, prime sponsor; Barbara Poyneer, Connie Baesman, WA Coalition for Gifted Ed; PRO w/concerns: Robert Butts (OSPI).