
Education Committee

HB 1066

Brief Description: Revising learning assistance program distribution formula.

Sponsors: Representatives McDermott, Quall, P. Sullivan, Haigh, Hunter and Ormsby; by request of Governor Locke.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The funding formula for the Learning Assistance Program is revised from one based on 50 percent for assessment results and 50 percent for family need to one based solely on family need.

Hearing Date: 1/24/05

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

Washington's Learning Assistance Program (LAP) has been in operation since 1987. The program is designed to help students who need additional time and assistance to achieve basic skills in reading, mathematics, language arts and academic readiness. School districts apply to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for program funds, each submitting a program plan to the agency. The OSPI must approve the districts' program plans before any funds are released. The plans may include a variety of activities and services targeted to struggling students, including extended learning, focused professional development, consulting teachers, tutoring, and parent outreach and support.

Since the second Doran decision in 1983, funding for struggling students has been considered part of basic education. The Legislature has appropriated about \$127 million for the LAP program for the 2003-05 biennium. The money is allocated to school districts using a formula that includes both student achievement on norm-referenced tests and a poverty factor. The formula, which is not codified, is included in the state's biennial budget. Once the districts have received the funding, they may distribute it as necessary to assist eligible low-performing students anywhere in their districts. In many districts, the LAP funds are blended with funding from the federal Title I program. During the biennium, Washington received more than \$310 million for the Title I program. The combination of these funds provided about \$437 million to school districts during the 2003-05 biennium to meet the specific learning needs of struggling students.

The formula for determining budget allocations to the program was changed in 2004. Beginning with the 2005 budget, 50 percent of the funding will be based on assessment results and the other

50 percent will be based on one or more family income factors measuring economic need. The law does not specify which assessments or income factors will be used in the budget formula.

Former Governor Locke proposed changing the formula to one based totally on economic need. He also proposed a hold harmless provision so that no district's LAP funding would be lower than the amount the district received in the previous year. Finally, he proposed an increase in program funding of \$41,000,000 for the 2005-07 biennium.

Summary of Bill:

The funding formula for the Learning Assistance Program is revised from one based on 50 percent for assessment results and 50 percent for family need to one based solely on family need.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.