

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6097

AS OF JANUARY 21, 1994

Brief Description: Extending the duration of special services demonstration projects.

SPONSORS: Senators Bauer, Wojahn, Oke, Pelz and Rinehart; by request of Legislative Budget Committee

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Hearing Dates: January 24, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Special education demonstration pilot projects were created in 1991 as the result of a Legislative Budget Committee study. The purposes of the projects are to: 1) develop methods to use resources efficiently and increase student learning; 2) promote noncategorical approaches to special services program design, funding and administration; 3) develop efficient and cost effective means for identifying students as specific learning disabled to increase the proportion of resources devoted to classroom instruction; 4) avoid unnecessary labeling of students; and 5) provide for a means to grant waivers from state rules, especially those exceeding federal requirements.

The legislation was amended in 1992 to clarify that the intent of the projects is to discourage unnecessary labeling of students while still providing state funding for needed services. Provisions were added permitting districts that have projects designed to reduce unnecessary labeling of students as handicapped to use prior handicap enrollments as the basis for funding during and two years after the project.

Between ten and 25 projects are authorized. In 1991, three projects were approved: Seattle, Edmonds and Olympia. Seattle withdrew from the project in August of 1993. In 1992, six more projects were approved in Battle Ground, Clover Park, North Central ESD Reading Recovery Coop (Bridgeport, Chelan, Manson, Omak, Tonasket, and Wenatchee), Northshore, Stanwood, and Vancouver.

The office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to do an interim study in 1993 and a final study in 1995.

The current program expires in July 1, 1996.

SUMMARY:

Districts that have projects designed to reduce unnecessary labeling of students as handicapped can use the prior handicapped enrollment as the basis for funding. The restriction on using this only during the duration of the project and two years after the project is removed. References permitting this option to be used for projects approved in 1991 or after 1992 are deleted.

A new program option is added. This would permit districts who have more than 4 percent of their students with specific learning disabilities before participating in the project to continue to receive funding based upon 4 percent of their enrollment without labeling students.

The selection advisory committee is authorized to request proposals for up to ten more projects.

The expiration date of the program is changed from January 1, 1996 to September 1, 2001.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 17, 1994