

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SHB 2849

C 319 L 98

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Enhancing student achievement accountability.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Talcott, Johnson, B. Thomas, Kastama, L. Thomas, Benson, Lambert, Alexander, Robertson, Pennington, McDonald, Lisk, Cairnes, Radcliff, Ballasiotes, Zellinsky, Backlund, D. Schmidt, Delvin, Carlson, Sump, Chandler, Smith and Thompson).

House Committee on Education
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background: On November 1, 1997, the Commission on Student Learning presented to the Legislature the commission's recommendations on kindergarten through fourth grade reading accountability. The recommendations were developed by the commission's accountability task force and adopted unanimously by the commission. In its letter transmitting the recommendations, the commission stated that it would complete recommendations for the overall accountability system in 1998, including provisions for rewards, assistance and intervention. The commission recommended that the Legislature defer action on rewards and sanctions until the full report is completed.

The commission and its task force recommended that each school board develop a three-year, district-wide goal to decrease by at least 25 percent the percentage of students who did not meet the fourth grade reading standard on the fourth grade assessment. Each school board would also specify annual district-wide increments toward the goal. Each elementary school in the district would establish its own goal for fourth grade students. Those goals would be approved by the school board. The aggregate of the goals adopted by each school would meet or exceed the district-wide improvement goal.

The commission and its task force also recommended a system for each school board to use to disseminate information about its goals to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the media, parents, guardians, and other interested parties. Finally, the commission and its task force recommended that, by the end of the three-year period covered by the goals, the SPI and the school districts review progress toward achieving the goals and reset goals for the next three-year period.

Summary: Establishment of Reading Accountability Goals. Each school board must meet new requirements to improve young students' reading skills and to report on the district's improvement efforts to parents and other interested parties. Each school board must meet the following requirements:

- Establish a three-year district-wide goal to decrease by at least 25 percent the number of students who did not meet the reading standard on the fourth grade assessment of student learning;
- Specify yearly district-wide percentage improvements toward the goal;
- Approve three-year goals adopted by each elementary school in the district. The aggregate of the goals adopted by each school must meet or exceed the district-wide improvement goal;
- Use the district's results on either the 1997 or 1998 fourth-grade test as the baseline for improvement; and
- Report on the district's reading improvement goals and on its plans for and progress toward meeting the goals. The reports will be distributed to parents, community members, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and the press. The frequency of reporting to each entity and the contents and method of communication for each report are specified.

School district and elementary school reading improvement goals must be developed by December 15, 1998. By December 1, 2000, the SPI will report to the House and Senate Education Committees on the progress that has been made toward achieving the three-year reading goal. The report will include recommendations on setting reading goals for the ensuing three years.

These requirements expire on July 1, 2006.

Administration of Assessments. Beginning with the 1998-99 school year, districts must administer the second grade reading test annually during the fall. Existing language that encouraged districts to conduct a second grade test is removed.

The SPI must prepare and conduct a norm-referenced standardized achievement test in reading and mathematics for third grade students. The results of the tests will be provided to the students' parents. The SPI will report to the Legislature annually on the third grade, rather than fourth grade, test results.

Reporting Assessment Results. By September 10 of each year beginning in 1998, the SPI must report the results of the fourth grade assessment to schools, school districts, and the Legislature. The SPI must also post test results for each school on the

superintendent's Internet site. The reports will include results by school and school district, including changes over time.

These requirements expire on July 1, 2006.

The act is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 98 0

Senate 47 1 (Senate amended)

House 98 0 (House concurred)

Effective: June 11, 1998