

# HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

## HB 2803

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**Title:** An act relating to the Washington assessments of student learning.

**Brief Description:** Allowing private school students and students receiving home-based education to take the Washington assessments of student learning at district expense.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Lambert, Koster, Benson, Talcott, Cox, D. Schmidt, Esser, Lantz and Rockefeller.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Meeting Date:** January 27, 2000.

**Bill Analysis Prepared by:** Charlie Gavigan (786-7340)

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**Background:** A state-wide academic assessment process for use in elementary school, middle school, and high school is being developed, with some components finished and implemented and others still being developed. These assessments are the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). At the elementary school level, the WASL is currently required in reading, writing, communication (listening), and math. There are statutory time lines for implementing the WASL at the elementary level in science social studies, health, fitness, and the arts.

There also are statutory time lines for implementing a middle and high school level WASL in reading, writing, communication (listening), math, science, history, civics, geography, arts, and health and fitness.

Public school students are required to take the WASL assessments, while private school students and home-schooled students may voluntarily take the assessments. Generally, individual home-schooled and individual private school students may take the assessments at public schools at no cost as part of the school districts' ancillary programs. Private schools that wish to provide the assessments to their students must purchase the test from the assessment contractor (the cost is about \$23 per test).

Article IX, Section 4, of the state constitution provides that all schools maintained or supported wholly or in part by public funds must remain free of sectarian control or influence.

**Summary of Bill:** Individual home-schooled and individual private school students may take the WASL assessments at public schools at no cost as part of the school districts' ancillary programs. If a significant number of students who attend the same private schools wish to take the assessments at the private school, the assessment contractor may give the assessments at the private school and have the private school administer the

assessments. The state pays the cost of the test itself for each student, including processing the results, to the assessment contractor. The private school cannot be reimbursed for any of the costs of administering the test.

***Appropriation:*** None.

***Fiscal Note:*** Requested.

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