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## Education Committee

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# HCR 4415

**Brief Description:** Establishing a committee to review basic education.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Anderson, Haigh, Tom, Santos and Talcott.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creates a joint select committee to review and make recommendations on the alignment of the basic education laws with its education reform efforts.</li></ul>



**Hearing Date:** 2/4/04

**Staff:** Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

### Background:

The state constitution establishes the education of all children as the paramount duty of the state, and requires the Legislature to provide for a system of public schools. The constitution is the foundation upon which three school funding decisions made in the 1970s and 1980s rested. Those decisions, coupled with subsequent state laws and court decisions, have helped shape the budget formulas used to determine the state support for the public education. In order to meet its paramount duty, the Legislature dedicates almost one-half of the state's general fund monies to support the education of children in the public schools.

The funding system begins with state-supervised school district budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting practices. State resources, supplemented by local and federal monies, are distributed through funding formulas to equalize educational opportunities throughout the state. Basic education and categorical programs are state supported through these formulas. State resources include state general fund revenue, other state revenues, state property taxes, and timber excise taxes.

Every few years, the Legislature revisits various aspects of school funding. The 1998 Legislature directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to study the financing system for the public schools. The study included a review of school district revenue and expenditure practices, resource allocations within selected districts, and available data sources. The study also addressed class size and personnel deployment issues. It was presented to the Legislature in 1999.

### Summary of Bill:

A joint select committee of eight legislators is convened to review and make recommendations on the state's basic education laws. The committee will examine the definition of basic education to determine whether the current requirements align with and support the goals and requirements of the state's education reform laws and the federal "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001". The committee will recommend any changes necessary to align the state's definition of basic education to the state's education reform laws.

The committee will hold at least one publicized public hearing in each legislative district to accept public comment on the existing definition of basic education and on possible modifications to that definition. In addition, it may convene subcommittees.

The committee will be composed of four members of the House of Representatives, two from each major caucus, selected by the Speaker of the House, and four members of the Senate, two from each major caucus, selected by the President of the Senate. The committee will receive staff support from the legislative committee staff and will have their travel expenses reimbursed as provided in current law.

The committee will report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by January 3, 2007. It will be dissolved by June 30, 2007.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 29, 2004.