

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5641

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to school district nomenclature.

Brief Description: Changing nomenclature for first-class and second-class school districts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Keiser and Honeyford).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/13/17, 3/23/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Modifies school district nomenclature by changing statutory references to:
(1) "districts of the first class" or "first class districts" to "class one" districts;
and (2) "districts of the second class" or "second class districts" to "class two" districts.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Harris, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Hargrove, Johnson, Kilduff, Lovick, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Slatter, Springer, Steele, Stokesbary and Volz.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is responsible for the classification and numbering system of school districts. Any school district in the state that has a student enrollment in its public schools of 2,000 or more students, as shown by evidence acceptable to the Educational Service District (ESD) superintendent and the SPI, is a school district of

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the first class. School districts with fewer than 2,000 students are school district of the second class.

In the 2016-17 school year, 105 of Washington's 295 districts were classified as districts of the first class. These districts enrolled more than 89 percent of the statewide student population.

While school districts of the first class and the second class are largely bound by the same governance and operational requirements, some statutory and rule requirements, including certain provisions governing school district boards of directors, apply only to one classification type.

Summary of Bill:

School district nomenclature provisions are modified by changing statutory references as follows:

- references to "districts of the first class" or "first class districts" are changed to "class one" districts; and
- references to "districts of the second class" or "second class districts" are changed to "class two" districts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a housekeeping measure that resulted from capital budget discussions. Small districts are labeled as second class districts, not because the level of education they offer is inferior, but because they have fewer than 2,000 students. Labels and names can be hurtful and have a negative or inferior connotation. This bill changes "second class districts" to "class two districts" and "first class districts" to "class one districts." The bill is longer than you might expect because of the numerous law changes that are required.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Keiser, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.