

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1023

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to student educational performance.

Brief Description: Enhancing student performance.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Peery, Brough, G. Fisher, Heavey, Basich, Wineberry, H. Myers, Phillips, R. Johnson, Sprenkle, Spanel, Sheldon, Wood, Ogden, Rayburn, Jones, Prentice, Kremen, Leonard, Inslee, Bray, Dorn, Cantwell, Jacobsen, Valle, Roland, Hine, Winsley, Rasmussen and Brekke; by request of Governor Gardner.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 21, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1023 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*

Signed by 17 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff; Broback; Brumsickle; Cole; Dorn; Holland; P. Johnson; Jones; Neher; Orr; Roland; H. Sommers; and Valle.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background:

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The 1985 Legislature created the Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) to provide education opportunities for at-risk preschool children. The ECAP supplements the federal Head Start program, and thereby allows a greater number of at-risk children to attend preschool.

BASIC EDUCATION

In 1854, the first legislative assembly of the Washington Territory began a long history of state involvement in common schools when it established the governance framework

and state funding formula for the common schools in the State. Through the years, the number of state-imposed education requirements has increased, especially as a result of the Basic Education Act of 1977.

The Basic Education Act included two major features: it significantly increased the state's contribution to the funding of schools in the State, and specified in detail what was required by the State for a school district to be eligible for "basic education funding." These compliance requirements include, for example, the number of program hours that have to be offered by school districts, the amount of time teachers must be in the classroom, and a requirement that schools have a minimum 180 day school year.

In addition to the "basic education" requirements, the Legislature, State Board of Education, and superintendent of public instruction have imposed a variety of other requirements on school districts. Examples include graduation requirements, specific courses that must be taught, and laws and budgetary language that specifically direct how state allocations must be spent for categorical and other programs.

Many believe that these state-imposed requirements place too much emphasis on complying with requirements, and not enough emphasis on the educational outcomes of students. In their view, the State should dramatically reduce its requirements, but hold school districts accountable for the educational achievement of their students.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Legislative Intent

The intent section includes a vision for education in Washington.

Early Childhood Education

The objective of the Early Childhood Education Program is made more specific by indicating the program is for low-income children not served by the federal Head Start program.

Commission on Student Learning

The Commission on Student Learning is established. The objectives of the commission shall be to identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected to be achieved by students; develop a statewide assessment system; and develop

strategies that will assist schools in ensuring that these essential learnings are mastered by students.

Membership: The commission shall consist of fourteen members. The governor shall appoint nine of the members to the commission, and shall appoint the chair. At least one of the governor's appointments must come from each of the following groups from a list of names submitted by each group; teachers, principals, school district superintendents, school board members, business, and parents. In addition, other members shall include the superintendent of public instruction; the president of the State Board of Education; the chair of the Higher Education Coordinating Board; the chair of the State Board for Vocational Education; and a representative of the state's teacher preparation programs.

Technical Advisory Committees: The commission shall establish technical advisory committees that include state and local educational practitioners.

Duties: The commission shall:

(a) Identify what is essential for elementary and secondary students to know and be able to do. At a minimum, these essential skills and knowledge shall include reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and critical thinking. If deemed appropriate, these essential learnings may be expanded to include other areas, including attitudes.

(b) By June 30, 1992, develop recommendations for the repeal or amendment of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, budgetary language and other factors that inhibit schools from adopting strategies designed to ensure that students achieve the essential learnings.

(c) By June 30, 1992, recommend accurate and fair indicators to determine the effectiveness of schools and school districts, and recommend steps that should be taken to assist those school districts and schools in which student learning is below expected levels of performance.

(d) By November 1, 1992, develop recommendations for eliminating or modifying college and university entrance requirements that inhibit schools from adopting strategies that are designed to ensure that students achieve the essential learnings.

(e) By November 1, 1993, present to the State Board of Education the essential learnings the commission has identified for elementary students and a statewide performance-based assessment system for use in the

elementary grades. The commission shall recommend how schools should utilize the results of the assessment. The elementary assessment shall be implemented beginning in the 1994-95 school year. The State Board of Education and superintendent of public instruction may modify the assessment, as needed, in subsequent school years.

(f) By November 1, 1994, present to the State Board of Education the essential learnings for secondary students and a statewide performance-based assessment system for use in the secondary grades. The assessment system shall be administered at least once in the secondary grades, and lead to a "Certificate of Initial Mastery." The commission shall recommend to the State Board of Education how the certificate should be used. The secondary assessment shall be implemented beginning in the 1995-96 school year.

(g) Identify the time, support and resources needed by schools and school districts to achieve the essential learnings.

(h) Estimate the cost of implementing the assessment system for the 1993-95 biennium.

(i) Complete other tasks, as appropriate.

Staffing of the Commission: The Office of Financial Management (OFM), at the direction of the commission, shall contract with an educational organization to provide staff support for the commission. OFM and its contractor may enter into subcontracts with teachers, higher education faculty, school districts, state agencies, and other individuals and organizations. Funds may also be used for pilot programs and approaches to school district restructuring.

Expiration Date: Authority for the commission shall expire on June 30, 1995.

Basic Education Requirements

Interim Exemptions: Prior to September 1, 1995, school districts may be exempted from the self-study process, student learning objectives, teacher classroom contact requirements, minimum 180 day school year, and program hour offerings if the district submits a plan to the State Board of Education for restructuring its education program. Specific requirements of the plan are provided. However, if a district intends to waive the program hour offerings or 180 day minimum school year, it must provide at least an annual average of 1,000 hours of instruction in grades 1 through 12, and 450 hours in kindergarten.

Future Basic Education modifications: Effective September 1, 1995, the following changes to the Basic Education Act are made:

-- Program hour offerings/180 day school year: The current program hour requirements are repealed. These repealed requirements specify the number of program hours, course requirements, and amount of time that must be devoted to "work skills" and "basic skills." In addition, the requirement of a minimum 180 day school year is repealed.

In the place of program hour requirements and the 180 day school year, school districts must: 1) offer a district-wide annual average of at least 1,000 "instructional hours" per school year in elementary and secondary schools, and a district-wide annual average of at least 450 hours in kindergarten.

-- Student/teacher contact hour requirement: The existing requirement that teacher's direct classroom contact time average is at least 25 hours per week is repealed.

Graduation requirements: The authority to establish minimum graduation requirements is left solely to the State Board of Education.

Technical Assistance: The superintendent of public instruction shall provide, or contract to provide, technical assistance in curriculum development, assessment of student performance, and program evaluation.

Repealed Sections: The student learning objective requirements are repealed effective September 1, 1995.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Legislative Intent: An intent section is inserted that includes a vision for education in Washington.

Early Childhood Education: Language is modified that could be construed as providing an entitlement to early childhood education.

Basic Education Requirements: The proposed requirement is removed that all students master the basic skills/essential core competencies as a condition for the school district receiving basic education funding. Implementation of changes in program hour offering, teacher student contact time, and 180 day school year requirements is delayed until

September 1995. In the interim, provisions allow these requirements to be waived.

Graduation Requirements: Instead of repealing statutorily mandated minimum graduation requirements, authority for setting graduation requirements is transferred to the State Board of Education.

Commission: The name of the "Commission for the Assessment of Student Learning" is changed to the "Commission on Student Learning," and focus of the commission is broadened by having the commission make recommendations regarding steps needed to facilitate educational restructuring.

The commission is enlarged from 12 to 14 members, and teachers, principals, administrators, business, parents, and school board members shall be represented. The governor is required to select representatives from the above groups based on lists developed by their respective statewide organizations. A representative from the community colleges was eliminated, and a representative from the teacher colleges added. Also, a termination date for the commission, June 30, 1995, is included.

Essential Learnings: "Basic skills" and "essential core competencies" are changed to "essential learnings." The essential learnings shall include, at a minimum, reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and critical thinking. If deemed appropriate by the commission, these essential learnings may be expanded to other areas, including attitudes.

An additional year for development of the statewide assessments is allowed. Current assessment programs were not repealed. It is specified that the State Board of Education may modify the essential learnings after they are initially adopted.

Other Duties of the Commission: The commission is required to develop accurate and fair indicators to determine the effectiveness of schools and school districts. The commission shall also develop strategies for assisting school districts and schools in which student learning is below expected levels or performance.

The commission is required to identify the time, support and resources needed by schools and school districts to ensure the essential learnings are mastered.

Commission Staffing: The requirement that the Institute for Public Policy provide staff support for the commission is eliminated.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The commission shall take effect immediately. Changes to the Basic Education Act shall take effect September 1, 1995.

Testimony For: The world economy demands that our education system improve, and that all children learn. To improve the system, we must allow our teachers to teach, and not have them bogged down in unnecessary requirements. However, we should hold the system accountable. This accountability should measure student learning, not how many hours children are in school.

Testimony Against: While we support the concept of the bill, we also need to hold parents responsible for student learning. Also, for restructuring of our education system to occur, we need to provide educators with time for staff development and planning, and provide technical assistance.

Witnesses: Stan Marshburn and Mary McKnew, Governor's Office (in favor); Dwayne Slate and Thelma Jackson, Washington State School Directors' Association (in favor, with amendments); Bob Maier, Washington Education Association (supports sections, need funds for staff development); Kris Van Gorkom, School Administrators (in favor, with amendments); Walter Ball, School Principals (has reservations); Steve Nielsen, Business Roundtable (in favor); Heidi Nielsen (in favor); Perry Keithley, Superintendent of Public Instruction (supports concept); Kathleen Preston, Washington Vocational Association (supports concept); Andrew Rodriguez, Commission on Hispanic Affairs (in favor); Michelle Aguilar, Governor's Office on Indian Affairs (in favor); Jeff Evans, Washington Alternative Education Center (in favor); and James Kelley, African American Commission (in favor).