

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6366

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to school-age children at risk due to prenatal drug or alcohol exposure.

Brief Description: Creating the planning for learning project.

Sponsor(s): By Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Pelz, Bailey, Erwin, Craswell, Rinehart, Murray and A. Smith).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 24, 1992, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 18 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Broback; Brumsickle; Carlson; G. Cole; Dorn; P. Johnson; Jones; J. Kohl; Neher; Orr; Rasmussen; Roland; H. Sommers; and Valle.

Staff: Margaret Allen (786-7191).

Background: In a study prepared by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in April 1991, Drug-exposed Infants in Washington State: Estimating the Incidence, the estimates of drug exposed infants born to women in the general population ranged from four to 20 percent. When alcohol was included as a drug, the estimates of exposed infants ranged from 18 to more than 50 percent.

Such statistics indicate that an increasing number of children who were exposed prenatally to alcohol or other drugs will be entering the school system. These children are considered to have an increased risk of various physical, cognitive, and social impairments.

Effective teaching strategies reportedly can help such children succeed in school.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Planning for Learning Project is created, the purpose of which is to begin to develop and distribute information about effective teaching methods for elementary age school children who are at risk due to prenatal drug or alcohol exposure.

A goal of the project is to create a report that can be used by educators, school districts, and legislators on what is known about effective teaching practices for such children. The report is to be completed by December 15, 1992 and submitted to the Legislature and Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI).

The University of Washington, SPI, and school districts are to collaborate in the project to: (1) compile and analyze existing research on effective teaching and learning strategies for children at risk due to prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol; (2) develop recommendations for further research; and (3) develop policy and program implementation recommendations.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendment clarifies ambiguous language in the original bill. For example, the amendment makes clear that the project shall be conducted by the Fetal Alcohol and Drug Unit of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at the University of Washington School of Medicine, in conjunction with SPI and school districts.

Also, the amendment specifies that the report on learning styles and effective teaching strategies goes to SPI whereas the report containing recommendations for program and policy implementation goes to the Legislature as well as SPI.

The amendment strikes the appropriation, includes a null and void clause, and makes various other technical changes.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Removed.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: The behavior of these children is unpredictable. Having them in a classroom, even a highly successful classroom, is stressful for everyone. This bill is an important starting point. We pay \$1.4 million over the course of a lifetime of each of these children, not including loss of productivity, but in terms of increased

costs of such things as education, training, and medical care.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Pelz, prime sponsor (supports); Jenifer Katahira, Seattle Public Schools (supports); and Donna M. Burgess, University of Washington (supports).