

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1311

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to early intervention and prevention school programs.

Brief Description: Establishing the fair start program.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Orr, Winsley, Dorn, Roland, Rasmussen, Dellwo, Jacobsen, Pruitt and Brekke.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 18, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1311 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 18 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Broback; Brumsickle; Cole; Dorn; Holland; P. Johnson; Jones; Neher; Orr; Phillips; Rasmussen; Roland; H. Sommers; and Valle.

Staff: Bob Butts (786-7111).

Background: Research findings from national and state studies and demographic data indicate that an increasing number of children are at risk of not performing up to their potential in school. Contributing reasons include: child abuse and neglect, poverty, family transiency, substance abuse, and poor health and nutrition. It is proposed that providing counseling and related prevention and intervention services at the elementary grade level will enhance the educational experience for students and educators.

During the 1990 Legislative session, the supplemental budget included a one-year appropriation of \$4.5 million for elementary school intervention and prevention services.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Fair Start program is established to provide financial resources to assist school districts in providing early intervention and prevention services for elementary school children.

Funds from the Fair Start program shall be used by school districts and educational service districts to provide counseling, health care, and other types of social services. These services may be provided by private and public providers.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall distribute the funds for the program equitably to all school districts based on the district's enrollment in kindergarten through sixth grade. Allocations for school districts enrolling fewer than 1,000 FTE students shall be distributed to the educational service district in which the district is located.

School districts shall establish formal arrangements for coordinated case management with mental health agencies and other public or private social service agencies.

Reporting and evaluation requirements are specified.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: A reference to "lead" mental health agencies was removed. The \$9,400,000 appropriation was removed, and a "null and void" clause added.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 6, 1991.

Appropriation: Removed.

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

Testimony For: This program has had a tremendous impact on school children, and needs to be funded on a permanent basis. In conversations with elementary and secondary principals, they all agree that prevention and intervention services for elementary-aged children is a top priority.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Margaret Casey, The Children's Alliance (in favor); Karyn Clarke, Tacoma School District (in favor); Pat Thibaudeau, WA Committee on Mental Health (in favor, with amendment); Gary Ness, Helping At-Risk Kids (in favor); Peg Morgan, Seattle/King County Youth & Family Services (in favor); and Walter Ball, Association of Washington School Principals (in favor).