

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1543

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, APRIL 5, 1991

Brief Description: Providing family support for schools with at-risk students.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Fraser, Belcher, Winsley, Leonard, Beck, Hine, Ebersole, Brekke, Jones, Pruitt, Holland, Jacobsen and Heavey).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Anderson, Craswell, Murray, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

Staff: Susan Mosborg (786-7439)

Hearing Dates: April 3, 1991; April 5, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Children experiencing social or health problems do not always receive assistance to address those problems before they become chronic or severe. The public schools can be an effective site for the early identification and assessment of a child's problems. If left unaddressed, such problems can affect the child's ability to learn and force school instructional staff to attend to the child's immediate problems rather than concentrate on classroom instruction.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Social and Health Services is authorized to fund and coordinate school based family support worker projects to assist with the educational and social service needs of students and their families. The programs will be awarded on a competitive basis. A local match of 25 percent is required for each project.

Grants will be equally distributed among elementary, middle, and secondary schools throughout the state. At least 80 percent of the grants will be awarded to schools in which 25 percent or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

The grants will fund at least one FTE family support worker per designated school. Small schools may share family support workers. Preference will be given to projects that contract

with private or public social services entities in the community to provide the family support workers.

To assist with the development of the projects, the department will, to the extent practical, rotate or loan department employees to schools to serve as family support workers.

A report to the Legislature is required by December 1, 1992, on the expansion of family support worker projects to additional schools. Department sponsored evaluations of family support worker programs are required by December of odd numbered years.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

A definition of "family support worker" is added and the definition of "eligible student" is deleted. Eligibility of students to receive free and reduced price meals is used to prioritize grants, but once a school receives a grant, any student in the school may be served.

Parents or guardians are added to the list of persons who must participate in the development of local family support worker projects.

Additional application information is added, including: district goals relating to the family support worker project; parental notification procedures regarding student referrals for services; use of grant funds for training family support workers; and identification of the evaluation and accountability procedures and activities the district will implement to assess the effectiveness of the district's family support worker project.

Specific reporting requirements are added for districts with family support worker projects. The biennial reports by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) are shifted from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years and moved from December 31 to December 1.

Clear rule-making authority is granted to DSHS and both DSHS and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) are directed to assure appropriate coordination between the Family Support Worker and Fair Start programs.

The bill becomes effective only if funds are provided in the 1991-93 biennial budget.

TESTIMONY FOR:

The family support worker model has provided important and needed services to students and their families and has worked well in Seattle and Olympia where the model has been implemented. It is a new approach, not really a case management model. It promotes and creates a cooperative community to meet the needs of children and families. Having someone in the community as the family support worker builds enormous trust between all the people involved in providing services.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Gladys Burns, Children's Coalition; John Van Rooy, Department of Social and Health Services; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Annetta Moody, parent; John Kvamme, Tacoma School District