

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5095

AS OF FEBRUARY 25, 1991

**Brief Description:** Reforming education.

**SPONSORS:** Senator Talmadge.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Staff:** Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

**Hearing Dates:** February 26, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

The Constitution of the state of Washington requires the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within the state and to provide a general and uniform system of public schools. Educational reform may be necessary to help the state continue to meet this constitutional mandate.

**SUMMARY:**

A number of changes are made to the state's educational system.

Changing the School Year. The current 180-day school year is extended to 200 school days by the 2000-01 school year. A school day is defined as equal to a specified number of hours. Districts are permitted to change the length of an individual school day as long as the required number of hours are offered.

A grant program is established to encourage school districts to develop year-round school schedules.

Financing Reform. The limit on the amount of money local school districts can raise by special levy is removed. The amount of levy equalization is increased from 10 percent to 15 percent. Districts that fail to pass levies in subsequent years are authorized to impose the prior levy. This provision would only take effect if a constitutional amendment passed.

The student/teacher ratio is increased to 55 teachers for every fulltime equivalent students in grades kindergarten through 12.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to develop a proposal for a weighted student funding formula and submit that proposal to the Legislature by January 1, 1993.

Reforming the Teaching Profession. The limits on teachers salaries are removed. However, minimum salaries for beginning teachers are still required.

A task force is established to develop a career ladder system by September 1, 1993.

In disputes involving a change in contract status, teachers may choose arbitration rather than settling the dispute in court. Teachers are no longer automatically entitled to attorney fees in cases involving disputes over employment either in an administrative hearing or on appeal.

Teachers are required to be evaluated four times a year rather than two times a year. The option of using a short form of evaluation is removed. Statewide evaluation standards are established.

The State Board of Education is required to adopt rules authorizing persons with special knowledge or expertise in specific fields of knowledge to teach students.

Education for Highly Capable Students. The program for highly capable students is made part of basic education and required to be provided by all school districts. School districts may receive funds only for gifted programs for 3 percent of their fulltime equivalent students.

Business and School Partnerships. Businesses may receive a 25 percent business and occupation tax credit for donations to schools. However, the school district must first accept the donated materials.

Local Decisions on Acquiring Equipment. The use of two to six year levies is clarified. Funds from such levies may be used to purchase equipment that is not part of a construction project and can be used to purchase replacement equipment. Both new and replacement equipment must be part of an interconnected system.

Student Competency. Core competency tests must be given to all eleventh grade students. A student must pass the test before graduating from high school. A diagnostic test and additional assistance is required for students scoring in the lowest quartile.

Early Childhood Education. The early childhood education and assistance program is made available to every eligible child. The program becomes part of basic education and an on-going responsibility of the state.

Before and After School Care. The authority of school districts to operate before and after school programs is clarified. The authority to adopt rules for school-based child care programs is shifted from the State Board of Education to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The superintendent is required to adopt rules establishing standards for facilities.

Governance. If a constitutional amendment passes, the Superintendent of Public Instruction would be appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate.

School board members, by resolution, may receive compensation.

Limits are placed on campaign expenditures by school board members.

School board members may be appointed by the mayor in first class districts having a city with a population of 400,000 or more in class AA counties.

The head teacher pilot project is created for up to five school districts. For participating school districts, a head teacher replaces the principal as the school administrator. The program expires December 31, 1993.

Accountability. The state may take over and operate a school district if the school district is so deficient that an adequate education cannot be provided for the students.

Vocational Education. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to adopt model curriculum for the integration of vocational and academic programs.

Basic Education Act. The Basic Education Act is repealed effective January 1, 1994.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available