

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5403

AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 1991

Brief Description: Changing school staffing ratios.

SPONSORS: Senators Murray, Gaspard, Rasmussen, Pelz, Rinehart, L. Kreidler, Bauer, Stratton and A. Smith.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mosborg (786-7439)

Hearing Dates: February 28, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Over the past several years, the Legislature has increased funding to lower school class sizes. Currently, school districts are funded at a ratio of at least 49 certificated instructional staff to every 1,000 students in grades K-3 (20.4 pupils per staff), and a ratio of 46 certificated instructional staff to every 1,000 students in grades 4-12 (21.7 pupils per staff). Many districts are funded at a higher ratio.

The 1989-91 biennial budget allows districts to be funded at a ratio of up to 51:1000 for grades K-3. They are funded at their actual level up to this point. The 1990 supplemental budget allows districts to qualify for a 52.3:1000 ratio in grades K-3 (19.1 pupils per staff) if they have an actual K-3 ratio of 51:1000 or more. These additional funds may be used to increase the K-3 ratio above 51:1000 or to hire classified classroom aides for grades K-3. In addition, if the district already has an actual K-3 ratio of 53:1000, the funds may be used to hire additional certificated instructional staff or classified classroom aides for any grade K-12.

For the purposes of this allocation, certificated instructional staff are classroom teachers, librarians, and educational staff associates (ESAs). ESAs are counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational and physical therapists, communication disorder specialists, and reading specialists. ESAs and librarians comprise about 8 percent of basic education certificated instructional staff.

SUMMARY:

For the purposes of state funding allocation, for grades K-3, the ratio of certificated instructional staff to students shall be 51:1000 for the 1991-92 through 2000-01 school years.

For grades 4-6, the ratio shall be increased by 1:1000 to 47:1000 for the 1991-92 school year, and increased by an

additional 1:1000 every two years, until, by the 1999-2000 school year, the ratio is 51:1000.

For grades 9-12, the ratio shall be increased by 1:1000 to 47:1000 for the 1991-92 through 2000-01 school years.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available