

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5474**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 15, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Planning a data collection and reporting system on children.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Rinehart, Bailey, Murray, West and Bauer.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Murray, Pelz, Rinehart, and Talmadge.

**Staff:** Susan Mosborg (786-7439)

**Hearing Dates:** March 6, 1991

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**BACKGROUND:**

The state collects data about a wide variety of factors known to affect children's readiness to learn and perform to their potential in school, including poverty, child abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy and childbearing, health status, etc. Because the data is collected by several agencies, and various programs within agencies, there is little consistency in the way the data is collected or reported. This limits the ability of local school districts and local and state government to use the data for the planning and evaluation of intervention programs. It also limits the ability of policymakers to use the data in making resource allocation determinations.

It has been suggested that as education reform shifts greater control of education to the local level, the ability to readily access and use state data will become increasingly important, not only for planning by local school districts, but for state efforts to hold school districts accountable for their performance.

Improvements in technologies such as geographic information technology (which allows computerized data such as census data to be fed into a computer and displayed in map form) have opened new possibilities in data reporting. Some state agencies have met informally to discuss ways of using such technology and taking other collaborative steps to improve the collection and reporting of state data regarding children. Such improvements may also benefit city and county governments.

## SUMMARY:

An interagency task force is created to plan a state system for the efficient collection and reporting of data about conditions affecting the education and well-being of children. The task force is coordinated and staffed by the Washington Institute for Public Policy at The Evergreen State College.

The purpose of the system is to provide school districts and local and state policymakers convenient access to demographic information from existing sources that is, to the extent feasible, consistently organized by school, school district, and other boundaries useful to the ongoing planning and evaluation of local and state programs, practices, and activities to benefit children.

Membership in the task force shall include one representative each from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Health, the Employment Security Department, the Department of Community Development, the Office of Financial Management, the Administrator for the Courts, and the associations of counties and cities. The task force is to be chaired by one of its members, and is to seek wide consultation and review of its plan.

The task force must submit a plan to the Legislature by December 1, 1991, both for activities that can be phased in over one to two years, and for activities that can be phased in over three or more years. The plan must: (1) emphasize efficient use of existing resources; (2) describe the system's inclusion of geographic information technology and linkage to various other systems; (3) enumerate types of data and their collection and reporting including measures needed to ensure adequacy; (4) provide for the development of common data definitions and reporting timelines; (5) provide for confidentiality and privacy; (6) describe how the system may be accessed; (7) provide for quality control; (8) provide for ongoing review and modification of the system; and (9) include a budget and timeline for implementation.

To the extent feasible, data must be aggregated by school districts and other geographic units. At minimum, data must include (1) census data; (2) juvenile and adult employment and unemployment data by age, gender, race or ethnicity; (3) vital records; (4) reported crime; (5) reported child abuse and neglect; (6) health indicators; (7) child social services participation; (8) educational attainment, including rates of graduation, GED completion, and school dropout; and (9) student population characteristics.

The plan must also provide a standardized means by which each school district may, at the school district's discretion, use the system to input individual-level data on student background characteristics and have access to that data in combination with the state demographic data.

The act expires December 1, 1991.

**Appropriation:** \$49,000 to the Washington Institute for Public Policy.

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Currently, most social services data is aggregated by county or zip code, which is not very useful to school districts. Districts would like to have information about the demographic factors of their district, such as data about teen mothers.

The task force would be very helpful. The issue is not new. The agencies need continued encouragement to collaborate to improve data collection and reporting.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** John Kvamme, Tacoma Public Schools (pro)

**HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):**

The duties of the task force are revised. The primary objective of the task force is to provide data aggregated by school districts for use by school districts and state and local policymakers in the planning and evaluation of local and state education programs, practices, and activities.

The task force will: (1) identify the likely uses of demographic data on the education and well-being of children, and determine what type of data is needed, or would be useful, in the planning and evaluation of local and state education programs, practices, and activities; (2) determine the feasibility, cost, and actions required to aggregate the data; (3) determine the feasibility, cost, and actions required to report the data, providing for quality control and appropriate confidentiality and privacy safeguards; (4) identify measures necessary to ensure the adequate collection and reporting of the data, including the use of common data definitions and reporting timelines; (5) implement those actions that can be taken with little or no cost, and identify actions, with proposed timelines, for which additional resources are required; and (6) examine related issues as the task force deems appropriate.

Representatives of the Department of Information Services and legislative staff are added to the task force.

The bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.