

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6179

AS OF JANUARY 20, 1992

Brief Description: Authorizing special levies for REACH for excellence programs.

SPONSORS: Senators Bailey and Erwin

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Hearing Dates: January 20, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Throughout the state there are a number of local initiatives to improve the education of and educational experience for students. One way the state can support existing and planned local efforts to improve education is to provide communities additional authority to raise funds to support educational restructuring initiatives in response to local needs.

SUMMARY:

A district is authorized to run a special levy that is in addition to other excess levies authorized by law, in an amount that does not exceed 5 percent of the district's levy base. This special levy does not affect the authorization of excess levies for the maintenance and operation of the district.

Funds from the special levy may be used only to establish a reach for excellence program in the district. The program must emphasize improvements in assessment of student learning and performance, develop more challenging curriculum for students, and encourage students, parents, building and district staff, and others to become more active partners.

The district may not expend the special levy funds until first submitting to the State Board of Education a plan for restructuring the educational program in one or more schools in the district. The plan elements are specified, including: specific standards for increased student learning that are expected to be achieved; how the district plans to achieve the standards; and how the district plans to determine if the higher standards are met.

Districts that pass the special levy and submit the plan to the State Board are exempt from statutory requirements relating to program hours offerings, school building self-study, student learning objectives, teacher classroom contact

hours, and student-to-teacher staffing ratios. These exemptions may be renewed every two years by the State Board upon the local district submitting an exemption renewal request.

If the district uses the exemption from the program hours offerings requirements, the district must offer a minimum of 450 instructional hours to students in kindergarten, and a minimum of 1,000 instructional hours to students in grades 1-12.

The district must submit to the State Board a biennial report on its reach for excellence program.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 13, 1992