

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6435

AS OF FEBRUARY 3, 1992

Brief Description: Relating to education.

SPONSORS: Senator Metcalf

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Larry Davis (786-7422)

Hearing Dates: February 4, 1992

BACKGROUND:

As the state continues to explore new ways to support educational restructuring, the restructuring debate includes discussion of issues such as: general funding formulas, district accountability, and support for staff development and training, and educational research and development. One suggestion for improving educational productivity is to simplify the manner in which state education funds are allocated to districts, allocate funds for: independent evaluations of districts, educational research and development, and in-service, and hold school districts accountable for students meeting state-determined basic education goals.

SUMMARY:

Basic Education Goals

The goals of the Basic Education Act are amended to provide students with the opportunity to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential to:

- 1) Demonstrate their ability to communicate with words, numbers, visuals and sounds in a variety of settings;
- 2) Demonstrate their ability to understand and apply the core concepts and principles from mathematics, the sciences, the arts and humanities, history, geography, and healthful living in day to day situations they will encounter in rapidly changing environment;
- 3) Demonstrate their ability to think critically and creatively in solving problems and to connect and integrate experiences and knowledge;
- 4) Demonstrate their ability to function as self-sufficient individuals and as responsible contributing members of modern society.

Allocation for Basic Education

The State Superintendent distributes annually to each school district an allocation for each annual average full-time equivalent (FTE) student based on a 180 day school year. The allocation per FTE student constitutes the educational allowance for basic education, learning assistance, bilingual education, vocational education, student transportation, food service, special education to the maximum extent possible for the continued receipt of federal funds, and all other activities local districts deem necessary to meet the basic education goals.

The allocation per FTE student shall include appropriate recognition of costs for: salaries and benefits for certificated and classified staff; non-employee related costs; and extraordinary costs of remote and necessary schools and small high school districts.

The allocation per FTE student is established in the state operating appropriations act by the Legislature. The Governor shall and the State Superintendent may recommend to the Legislature an allocation per FTE student determined as follows:

- 1) An instructional support allocation based on the previous five year average of the cost of the 13 school district size classifications;
- 2) A non-instructional support allocation based on the previous five year average of the cost of the 13 school district size classifications;
- 3) The allocation for instructional support and non-instructional support on a biennial basis shall be increased by the Consumer Price Index of the Puget Sound region;
- 4) The cost of transporting students to and from school shall be based on the actual cost for the 1990-91 school year of the 13 school district size classifications;

The allocation per FTE student amount is reviewed biennially by the State Superintendent and the Governor. In the event the Legislature rejects the allocation per FTE student amount recommended by the Governor and/or the State Superintendent, but does not adopt a new formula, the formula for the preceding school year shall remain in effect.

Student Transportation

The State Superintendent biennially reviews actual student transportation costs. If a district's costs exceed the state average cost per mile by more than 5 percent, an independent transportation review team, including a member representing the Washington State Patrol, evaluates the district's

transportation practices and reports to the State Superintendent with recommendations.

The State Superintendent defines the specifications for a safe, reliable, and efficient vehicle which can accommodate from 16-28 students, 29-40 students, and more than 40 students. Districts are reimbursed 100 percent of the cost for state defined student transportation vehicles.

Allocation for Students with Disabilities

The Legislature shall allocate appropriate funds for handicapped student programs to the extent necessary for the state or districts to continue to receive federal funds.

The Legislature may appropriate funds to districts on a per pupil basis for each student whose family income is below the poverty level.

The Legislature shall appropriate funds to districts on a per student basis when these funds would ensure continuation of federal funding for specific educational programs funded in part by the federal government.

The State Superintendent submits biennially to the Legislature in odd-numbered years a program budget request for students with disabilities.

Allocation for Evaluation, Research, and Staff Training and Development

The Legislature shall allocate by line item in the state budget to the State Superintendent an amount that is equivalent to 1/10th of 1 percent of the state general fund appropriation for basic education. These funds are expended as follows:

- 1) One-quarter of the allocation is used to conduct independent evaluations of individual districts' restructuring efforts, which may be conducted by a state university or an appropriate educational agency.
- 2) One-quarter of the allocation is used for educational research and development and information dissemination. Not less than three-quarters of this amount is distributed by grants to school districts for research and development projects.
- 3) One-half of the allocation is used for staff training and development which may be conducted in cooperation with schools of education within state universities or with educational service districts, or both.

Special Levy Authority

Beginning in fiscal year 1996, and thereafter, districts may submit to their registered voters a special levy request for a special educational program to allow some students to

achieve the state education goals through an alternative approach. The ballot shall outline the program proposal, what is intended to be accomplished by the program, and how the special levy dollars will be spent.

School Year, School Day, Student Age Eligibility

The school year for state fiscal purposes begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. The school year consists of the equivalent of 180 days for grades 1-12 and 180 half-days for kindergarten.

The equivalent of a school day is: not less than the equivalent of four hours for full-day kindergarten; not less than the equivalent of two and one-half hours for half-day kindergarten; not less than five hours for grades 1-3; not less than five and one-half hours for grades 4-8; and not less than six hours for grades 9-12.

Each district's K-12 program shall be accessible to students age five to less than 21. Districts shall establish written policies and procedures defining the qualifications for admission to the primary grades (grades 1-3). The policies shall provide for exceptions based upon ability, need or both of the individual student.

Expenditure and Accountability of State Funds for Education

School districts are encouraged to develop alternative methods of expending funds in their efforts to develop programs to provide students the opportunity to meet the state education goals.

Districts may use private contractors to provide ancillary services (e.g., transportation, food service). Funds the district saves by providing ancillary services through alternative methods are retained by the district but must be used for the district's instructional program.

School District Accountability

Each school district shall cause to be conducted biennially an independent audit of its educational program to determine the effectiveness of the program and to determine the extent to which district students are meeting the state education goals.

Districts shall submit to the State Superintendent biennially, within six months of the beginning of the next audit period, a copy of their biennial audit report.

New Teacher Provisional Status

The period of nonrenewal of employment contract for teachers and other nonsupervisory certificated personnel is three years during the person's first three years of employment with the district. This does not apply to persons who have completed at least three years of certificated employment in another district in Washington, in which case the period of nonrenewal

of employment contract in the new district is limited to one year.

Paperwork Reduction

The State Superintendent shall make every effort to reduce the number of reports districts are required to submit. The State Superintendent shall submit annually to the Legislature a report identifying reports and documents no longer required to be submitted by school districts.

By December 1, 1992, the State Superintendent recommends to the Legislature existing statutes requiring amendment or repeal to comply with the provisions of the bill.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal note: requested February 3, 1992