

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2764

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to integration of services for deaf and hard of hearing children.

Brief Description: Providing for integration of services for deaf and hard of hearing children.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Dickerson, Moeller, Chase and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/2/04, 2/4/04 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish an oversight committee to explore possibilities for the integration of the state's education services provided through the birth-to-three early intervention system, the P-12 system, and the Washington School for the Deaf.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Boldt, Ranking Minority Member; Roach, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Dickerson, Miloscia, Pettigrew and Shabro.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

As part of the House Children and Family Services Committee's 2003 interim plan, the committee assembled a Work Group on Deaf Education in Washington (Work Group) to consider the respective roles of, and the relationships among, the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD), local school districts, educational service districts, community services, and community resources in the delivery of effective education to hearing impaired children throughout the state, as well as the appropriate service delivery models for those children.

The Work Group consisted of the following: parents of a hearing impaired child; a hearing impaired adult; researchers on hearing impairment; a teacher of hearing impaired children; two members of the Board of Trustees of the WSD; a representative of the Governor's Office; a representative of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); a representative of Washington Sensory Disabilities Services; a representative of a local school district; a representative of an educational service district; a representative of the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP) in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS); four members of the Senate; a member of the House Education Committee; and the members of the House Children and Family Services Committee.

The Work Group held three meetings over the course of the interim at which a range of issues and topics were discussed, including current service delivery in the state from newborn hearing screening and early intervention services through the P-12 system, technological advances relating to hearing impairment, and the most recent research on outcomes and costs relating to hearing impairment.

At the final meeting of the Work Group, the members of the Work Group developed consensus statements, which reflect the basic principles agreed upon by all of the members of the Work Group, and goals and policy recommendations, which are based upon those consensus statements. The goals of the Work Group included integration of the WSD, the state's birth-to-three early intervention system, and the state's P-12 system, with the corresponding policy recommendation that the WSD, the DSHS, and the OSPI explore possibilities for the integration of the WSD, the birth-to-three early intervention system, and the P-12 system.

Summary of Bill:

The Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction are required to establish an oversight committee to explore possibilities for the integration of the state's education services provided through the birth-to-three early intervention system, the P-12 system, and the WSD.

Membership of the oversight committee must include the following: representatives of the Governor's office, the OSPI, the WSD, and the ITEIP; one or more parents of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing; one or more adults who are deaf or hard of hearing; one or more researchers on hearing loss; and one or more teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.

The oversight committee is required to report its recommendations concerning integration of the state's education services provided through the birth-to-three early intervention system, the P-12 system, and the WSD to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The intent is to sort out who should be providing what to whom, and hopefully have a more thoughtful policy on deaf education. This bill is consistent with the kinds of things that the WSD is aggressively attempting to do, to better integrate with and support work being done in school districts. We need to be very thoughtful about the composition of the committee, with a diversity of perspectives represented.

(With concerns) Certificated staff from the WSD should be included in the membership of the committee.

Testimony Against: The bill should be amended to include an adult who is deaf, an adult who is hard of hearing, and researchers on deafness in the membership of the committee.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Kagi, prime sponsor; and Larry Swift, Board of Trustees of the Washington School for the Deaf.

(With concerns) Lynn Maier, Washington Public Employees Association and United Food and Commercial Workers.

(Opposed) Larry Petersen, Washington State Association of the Deaf and Washington State Hearing Loss Alliance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.