

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HCR 4404

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Brief Description: Creating a joint select committee to examine the K-12 governance structure.

Sponsors: Representatives McDermott, Tom, Quall, Talcott and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/4/03, 3/5/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a joint select committee to study the governance structure of the state's K-12 system and to develop a plan that provides improved coordination, alignment, and accountability for the system.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox, Haigh, Hunter, McMahan and Rockefeller.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

At the state level, Washington's education governance structure is composed of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the State Board of Education (SBE), the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) and the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). The Workforce and Education Coordinating Board, an agency that considers career and technical education issues, straddles both K-12 and postsecondary education.

At the regional level, nine educational service districts provide a variety of financial and educational services to the school districts located in each of their regions. At the local level, 296 school districts educate almost one million public school students.

The SPI is a constitutional officer who has oversight responsibilities for the public schools. The SPI is also the CEO of the office that distributes state education funds and performs a number of other administrative duties required by state and federal education laws. The SBE is a statutory agency that was created before statehood as a policy body for the public education system.

In the early 1990s, the State of Washington embarked on an ambitious program to reform and restructure its public school system from a system based on inputs to a system based on results as measured by student achievement. In the process, the Legislature created a temporary commission, the Commission on Student Learning (CSL), to help guide the creation of the new performance based system. The Legislature studied the governance issue again in 1995, but did not make any major changes to it. The CSL expired in 1999.

In 1999 the A+ Commission was created to oversee and recommend policy on the state's academic accountability system. In 2000 the PESB was created to provide advice on educator preparation and certification and to oversee the creation of a testing system for new teachers.

Summary of Bill:

A legislative joint select committee is created to examine the governance structure of the state's K-12 system. The committee will develop a plan to provide improved coordination, alignment and accountability of the state's education system. The plan will concentrate on the state and regional level organizations that support education. In its plan development, the committee will consult with the education stakeholders, state level agencies that support education, educational service districts, and the Governor.

The joint select committee will be composed of eight members. Four members, two from each caucus, will be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Four members, two from each caucus, will be appointed by the President of the Senate.

By December 1, 2003, the joint select committee will provide an interim report on its work to the House and Senate Education Committees. It will provide a final report to the education committees by December 1, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Testimony For: The state agencies, organizations, and associations that represent various aspects of K-12 education comprise an alphabet soup of acronyms. A listing of

these agencies and organizations shows clearly why a governance study is needed. The governance structure for education must improve the alignment of and accountability for the system. The state's vision of education governance has become blurred in recent years with the creation of agencies with overlapping missions. It is time to streamline and create a cogent governance structure for the system. The focus on K-12 is the right focus for now.

(With concerns) The joint select committee should expand its focus to P-16.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative McDermott, prime sponsor; Larry Davis, State Board of Education; Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals; Gary King, Washington Education Association; and Bob Butts, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.