

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5906

As of January 22, 2004

Title: An act relating to school districts with an enrollment of less than three thousand students.

Brief Description: Exempting school districts with fewer than three thousand students from certain statutes and rules.

Sponsors: Senators Mulliken, Hargrove, Hewitt, Doumit, T. Sheldon, Finkbeiner, Haugen, Honeyford, Stevens, Morton, Johnson and Esser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/28/03; 1/27/04.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: The state Legislature has authorized local school boards of directors to establish the school districts' educational program offerings and operating policies. The program offerings and district policies must comply with state law and the rules adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education, unless a waiver is available and the district receives a waiver.

Summary of Substitute Bill: All school districts with a student enrollment of less than 3,000 full-time equivalent students are exempt from the requirements of each chapter of the education code applicable to public school districts and schools, except for specified laws. Those specified for compliance are the health, safety and civil rights laws, the requirement to participate in statewide assessments, the requirement to employ certificated teachers (except in exceptional circumstances), the employee record check requirements, the financial and audit requirements, the student performance improvement goals set by the A+ Commission and the reporting of the progress on those goals, the Open Public Meetings Act, and the collective bargaining provisions.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was heard during the 2003 legislative session. The substitute bill is different in two ways. First, it is clarified that the limit on student district enrollment is based on the number of full-time equivalent students and not on a headcount of students. Second, the exemption from statutory requirements is placed in every chapter of the education code, except for the chapters addressing private schools and home-based instruction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.