

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6536

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As of January 31, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to best practices for students at risk.

**Brief Description:** Establishing best practices for students at risk.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe, King, Kauffman, Parlette, Franklin, Brandland, Murray, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Shin and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/30/08.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

**Background:** There are nine educational service districts (ESDs) in Washington, each serving a specific region of the state and providing training, technical assistance, administrative support, and other services to school districts. ESD 105 is located in south central Washington, and ESD 112 is located in southwest Washington.

Under current law, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must, to the extent funding is available, contract with school districts, ESDs, and approved in-service providers to conduct training sessions for school certificated and classified employees in conflict resolution and other violence prevention topics.

In 2007 the Legislature established the Building Bridges Program, a statewide comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval system. To assist and enhance the work of the Building Bridges Program, a state-level work group was created to identify fiscal, legal, and regulatory barriers that prevent coordination of program resources across agencies at the state and local level as well as identify research-based and emerging best practices regarding prevention, intervention, and retrieval programs.

**Summary of Bill:** By September 1, 2010, every ESD must implement best practices for students at risk to identify, intervene, and seek support for students showing emotional, social, or academic risk.

ESDs 105 and 112 must develop a model program, using emerging best practices, by September 1, 2008. The ESD must collaborate with specified stakeholders. The model program must include three components: (1) an early warning system to identify signs for students at risk of emotional, social, or academic failure; (2) a personalized assessment for each student

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that addresses a student's threat of violence to himself or herself or others; and (3) a support system that provides wraparound services for students who are determined to be at risk and their families.

Additionally, ESD 105 and 112 must each administer one demonstration project to implement and document the effects of the best practices for students at risk. One demonstration project will be in a high school and the other in a middle school or junior high school. ESDs 105 and 112 must select the project participants, provide staff training for the early warning system and personalized assessment components and broker the wraparound services for students and their families.

ESDs 105 and 112 must evaluate the demonstration projects, which would include an outline of the steps taken to develop and implement the best practices for students at risk, conclusions regarding the most important components for student success, and recommendations for expansion of the best practices. The ESDs must report their findings to the Governor and appropriate education and fiscal committees of the Legislature with an interim report due December 1, 2008, and a final report due December 1, 2009.

**Appropriation:** The sum of \$100,000 is appropriated to ESDs 105 and 112 for fiscal year 2009, and \$50,000 for fiscal year 2010.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 21, 2008.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: A student should be assessed prior to becoming a threat or at risk for academic or social failure. There is a growing concern about the amount of violence as it relates to mentally ill kids. Demonstration projects are needed to figure out which strategies and tools will work to deal with student-to-student violence and student-to-staff violence. We can prevent kids from getting into situations where they become a danger to themselves and others. ESDs can play a role in regional support, but additional funding is needed to expand core responsibilities. The Building Bridges work group, which is charged with looking at best practices in this area, could be a good link with additional resources.

OTHER: What happens once you have identified a student who is at risk, particularly in the field of mental health? Schools are not geared up to deal with this. The pilots may address how the community can provide services that will be necessary; however the cost of the program is a concern.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Marcia Fromhold, ESD 112; Bill Keim, Association of ESDs; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Board; Joe Pope, Association of Washington School Principals.

OTHER: Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.