

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5408

C 10 L 95 E1
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing school bus purchasing procedures.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Johnson, Quigley and Long; by request of Office of Financial Management).

Senate Committee on Education

Background: Districts purchase 450 school buses per year. In the 1993-95 operating budget, the Legislature required the Superintendent of Public Instruction to evaluate methods of purchasing school buses.

The study found that the average price for a school bus in Washington was substantially higher than the price of buses in Florida, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Carolina and Texas. These states have state centralized bus purchasing.

Currently, school districts purchase buses, and the state provides replacement funds on a depreciation basis. Annual payments are made to districts that, when saved by the district, would pay for a new bus. Annual depreciation payments are calculated based on the remaining life of the bus and the state-average purchase price for that category. The state average purchase price is based upon the districts' actual purchase prices in the previous school year adjusted for inflation.

Summary: The Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with regional transportation coordinators of educational service districts, must establish school bus categories and the minimum specifications for each category. The superintendent must obtain price quotes for each category from school bus dealers. The categories must be developed to produce minimum long range operating costs.

The state reimbursement rate is based on the lowest price quote received in each category. Districts may purchase buses from the dealer submitting the lowest price without going to bid. Districts may purchase buses directly from dealers and may conduct their own competitive bid process.

For the purposes of comparative studies, the categories used in the studies must be the same as those in the beginning of the 1994-95 school year.

By December 15, 1996, the superintendent, in consultation with the Legislative Budget Committee, must report on the savings due to using the new method, a comparison of reimbursement rates in the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years, and the price quotes received by the state compared with the price quotes received by districts.

Votes on Final Passage:

First Special Session

Senate 30 7
House 83 6 (House amended)
Senate 36 5 (Senate concurred)

Effective: June 14, 1995 (Section 1)
August 22, 1995
September 1, 1995 (Section 2)