
Ways & Means Committee

HB 1558

Brief Description: Regarding enrollment calculations for certain K-12 programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Finn, Quall and Rolfes.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the calculation for full-time equivalent student enrollments used for selected school funding allocations from a current year enrollment count to a three-year rolling average, effective the 2009-10 school year.
- Specifies that for programs currently based on prior year enrollment counts, the three-year rolling average provision will not take effect until the 2010-11 school year.

Hearing Date: 2/5/09

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349)

Background:

School districts in Washington receive funding from the state for a variety of programs. The primary source of funding for districts is general apportionment funding. General apportionment supports the basic educational activities of school districts and is based on allocations of staff units for three different categories of staff: classified, administrative, and certificated instructional staff. These staff units are generated by FTE student enrollment counts based on an average of nine individual student counts taken once a month through the school year. General apportionment comprises approximately 70 percent of state funding to school districts.

A variety of other state programs generate funding based on student enrollment counts. The Learning Assistance Program (LAP) comprises approximately 2 percent of total state funding and supports remedial support for struggling students. LAP funding is based primarily on the percent of students eligible for the federal free and reduced price lunch program from the prior school year. Additionally, the Student Achievement Fund comprises approximately 6 percent of total state funding and supports per pupil allocations to school districts for a variety of school

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reform initiatives. The school year 2008-09 allocations for the Student Achievement Fund are \$458 per student and are based on prior school year enrollment counts. Other programs with funding generated through enrollment include institutional funding, special education, transitional bilingual education, and a variety of pilot and grant programs funded in the Education Reform budget.

Statewide student enrollments have been increasing in recent years. Since the 2000-01 school year, total K-12 enrollment has grown every year. Projected enrollment for the 2008-09 school year is approximately 979,594, which would be an increase over prior year levels by over 4,400 student FTEs. Although statewide enrollments have been increasing, a number of individual districts have declining enrollments.

Summary of Bill:

House Bill 1558 changes the method for calculating enrollment for general apportionment, Student Achievement Fund, and Learning Assistance Program payments to school districts. Currently, funding is based on once-a-month student counts averaged over nine months of the school year. This bill changes the methodology so that funding is based on a three-year rolling average of enrollment based on current year counts as well as enrollments from the two most recently completed school years.

Funding for special education and the transitional bilingual program remains unchanged and continue to be based on current year student counts. Funding for the Student Achievement Fund and the Learning Assistance Program changes to the three-year rolling average methodology, but this change would not take effect until the 2010-11 school year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2009.

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