

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5093

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As of January 25, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to revising education provisions to implement budget reductions.

**Brief Description:** Revising education provisions to implement budget reductions.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe and Shin; by request of Office of Financial Management.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/24/11.

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

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (AGOAC). The AGOAC was created during the 2009 legislature to synthesize the findings and recommendations from the 2008 achievement gap studies into an implementation plan and to recommend policies and strategies to close the achievement gap in Washington State. It is composed of six legislators and a representative from each of the minority commissions, the federally recognized Indian tribes, the Office of the Education Ombudsman, and the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must provide staff support to the AGOAC. The committee is required to submit an annual report to the Governor, SPI, the State Board of Education, the Professional Educator Standards Board, and the Legislature.

Career and Technical (CTE) Student Organizations. SPI must provide staff support for statewide coordination of CTE student organizations, including but not limited to the National FFA Organization; Family Career, and Community Leaders of America; SkillsUSA; Distributive Education Clubs of America; Future Business Leaders of America; and the Technology Student Organization.

Math, Science, and Technology Director. SPI must employ a statewide director for math, science, and technology to perform specified duties.

Special Services Pilot Program. In 2003 the Legislature authorized and funded two school districts to pilot programs of early and intensive intervention services in reading and language with the intent to reduce the number of children who may eventually require special

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education services. The pilot program was originally to expire June 30, 2007. In 2007 the Legislature reauthorized, expanded, and funded the pilot program for seven school districts. The expanded pilot program is to expire June 30, 2011.

Mathematics End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments. Except for some students receiving special education, students must meet the state standard on the statewide high school assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics; a retake of such assessments; or an approved alternative assessment to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA). In 2008 the Legislature directed the SPI to replace the statewide comprehensive high school mathematics assessment, with two EOC assessments: Algebra/Integrated Mathematics I, and Geometry/Integrated Mathematics II. The mathematics EOCs must be implemented statewide in the 2010-11 school year. As the transition is made, the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014 may use the results of either the comprehensive statewide mathematics assessment or the two EOCs to obtain a CAA. Beginning with the class of 2015, the comprehensive mathematics assessment is not available to obtain the CAA and the approved alternative assessments are available only to a student who has taken the sequence of EOCs once.

Levy Equalization or Local Effort Assistance (LEA). The state Constitution gives school districts the authority to levy property taxes with a 50 percent yes vote of voters residing within the school district. Current statutes provide state local effort assistance dollars to districts that pass a levy and have a levy rate that exceeds the state-wide average levy rate. The statute provides that, "The purpose of these funds is to mitigate the effect that above average property tax rates might have on the ability of a school district to raise local revenues to supplement the state's basic program of education. These funds serve to equalize the property tax rates that individual taxpayers would pay for such levies and to provide tax relief to taxpayers in high tax rate school districts." Such funds are not part of the district's basic education allocation.

**Summary of Bill:** The SPI is responsible for staffing the AGOAC; the CTE student organizations; and the math, science, and technology director only to the extent that funds are available. The special services pilot program expires March 1, 2011, instead of June 30, 2011. The comprehensive statewide mathematics assessment is no longer available for the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014. The graduating class of 2013 must meet the state standard on only one of the mathematics EOCs to obtain a CAA. Local effort assistance payments to school districts are reduced by 10.72 percent for the first half of 2011 and by 6.287 percent for the second half of 2011.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The changes in this bill align the statutes with and implement the Governor's funding proposals. Some of the changes are the reductions that were passed in the early action supplemental budget in the December special session,

including the across the board 6.3 percent reduction in levy equalization for the current fiscal and school year. This is different than the Governor's proposal for levy equalization for the biennial budget.

CON: The proposal to lower the math requirements is not in the best interest of our students or good for instilling long-term support for our schools. Washington has been working so hard to move toward a meaningful high school diploma and now you are retreating on the diploma requirements. This is not going to prepare our students for the jobs of the future. We need to step up on STEM not back down. Our reading and writing assessments have produced strong improvements in student scores and most of our students are meeting the state standards. However, math scores are dropping because students are not yet held accountable for meeting the state standards in math.

OTHER: Because of this bill, some of the extraordinary teacher aides who help students learn when they are struggling or when they are highly capable may lose their job and the school programs may be eliminated. Most school districts do receive levy equalization funds. The reduction to levy equalization breaks the promise that the Legislature made to school districts last year when the compromise was made to raise the levy lid. Other significant cuts are coming that will have devastating impacts for school districts and the levy equalization dollars are needed to help mitigate those impacts so this section should be removed. The special services pilots have been very successful and now the state needs to infuse this success into the system statewide so there will be successful academic interventions for our struggling students. We support the Governor's proposal to require students to meet the state math standards on only one of the math EOC exams as we transition from a comprehensive math assessment to EOC assessments. But delay alone will not help – there needs to be a comprehensive plan to get our students to meet the state standards. Be bold and put on the table the savings that could be achieved by suspending the assessment requirements for high school graduation. The idea of the savings from this bill is very attractive so if you make these cuts please use the resources saved to fund effective student programs.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Jim Crawford, Office of Financial Management.

CON: Steve Mullin, WA Roundtable.

OTHER: Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Education Association; Jenna Cusack, Sydney Kleingartner, student, Garfield Elementary; Brad Burnham, WA State Board of Education; Dan Steele, WA Association of School Administrators; Marie Sullivan, WA State School Directors' Association; Ramona Hattendorf, Washington State PTA.