
HOUSE BILL 1325

State of Washington

62nd Legislature

2011 Regular Session

By Representatives Hunt, Dammeier, Darneille, Lias, Carlyle, Roberts, Jinkins, Orwall, Kenney, Hasegawa, McCoy, Fitzgibbon, and Tharinger

Read first time 01/19/11. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to statewide school district reorganization; adding
2 a new section to chapter 28A.345 RCW; adding new sections to chapter
3 28A.315 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 44.28 RCW; providing a
4 contingent effective date; and providing contingent expiration dates.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.345
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) The Washington state school directors' association shall work
9 with school districts to develop and implement a comprehensive
10 statewide reorganization initiative to streamline and provide
11 efficiencies in the administration and operation of school districts
12 and educational service districts. The goals of the initiative are
13 increased efficiency, cost savings, and an improved learning
14 environment for students.

15 (2) The school directors' association shall serve as the lead
16 organization for the reorganization initiative, but shall work
17 collaboratively with and be assisted by state associations representing
18 school administrators, school business managers, educational service
19 districts, principals, teachers, classified employees, and parents.

1 (3) The following efficiency strategies must be considered and may
2 be included under the initiative:

3 (a) Consolidation of districts;

4 (b) Consolidation of administration between or among districts;

5 (c) Developing and implementing shared services, including but not
6 limited to food services, transportation, administration, construction,
7 technology, and instruction;

8 (d) Increased use of technology; and

9 (e) Other efficiencies and consolidations as appropriate.

10 (4) The school directors' association shall file an annual report
11 starting September 1, 2011, and each September 1st thereafter, with the
12 office of the superintendent of public instruction that includes
13 documented and projected annual cost savings resulting from the
14 reorganization initiative.

15 (5) Cost savings resulting from the reorganization initiative under
16 this section shall remain in the public school system to allow school
17 districts to redirect resources to activities that improve student
18 learning.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.315
20 RCW to read as follows:

21 (1) The commission on statewide school district reorganization is
22 established to develop and recommend a comprehensive plan for the
23 reorganization of Washington school districts and to consider and
24 determine appeals of or alternatives to the reorganization plan if the
25 plan is adopted by the legislature.

26 (2) The commission shall be composed of the following members:

27 (a) One representative of the state board of education selected by
28 the members of the board;

29 (b) Two representatives of school administrators selected by the
30 Washington association of school administrators, with one
31 representative each from eastern and western Washington;

32 (c) Two representatives of school board directors selected by the
33 Washington state school directors' association, with one representative
34 each from eastern and western Washington;

35 (d) One representative of certificated instructional school
36 employees selected by the Washington education association;

1 (e) An individual with experience as a demographer or as a
2 participant on the redistricting commission under chapter 44.05 RCW
3 selected by the governor; and

4 (f) Four individuals selected jointly by the speaker of the house
5 of representatives and the president of the senate, with two
6 individuals each from eastern and western Washington.

7 (3) Staff support for the commission shall be provided by the
8 office of the superintendent of public instruction. The superintendent
9 of public instruction shall convene the initial meeting of the
10 commission, at which time the members of the commission shall elect a
11 chair from among the members.

12 (4) Members of the commission are entitled to receive compensation
13 under RCW 43.03.240 and reimbursement for travel expenses in accordance
14 with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

15 (5) Any vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the
16 selection originally provided.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.315
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) The commission on statewide school district reorganization
20 established under section 2 of this act shall develop objective
21 criteria, ranked in priority order, for the reorganization of
22 Washington school districts. The commission may consider but shall not
23 be limited to the criteria in RCW 28A.315.015 and 28A.315.205. The
24 commission shall adopt the criteria as administrative rules under the
25 provisions of chapter 34.05 RCW. The commission shall hold at least
26 one public hearing on the proposed criteria in each educational service
27 district before final adoption. The commission shall cause notice to
28 be given at least ten days before the scheduled date of the hearing in
29 one or more newspapers of general circulation within the educational
30 service district.

31 (2)(a) Based on the adopted objective criteria, the commission
32 shall develop a comprehensive plan for the reorganization of Washington
33 school districts. The plan shall result in no more than one hundred
34 fifty school districts in the state and their boundaries. The plan
35 shall also result in a reorganization of the number and boundaries of
36 educational service districts.

1 (b) The commission shall hold at least one public hearing in each
2 educational service district during the development of the proposed
3 plan. The commission shall cause notice to be given at least ten days
4 before the scheduled date of the hearing in one or more newspapers of
5 general circulation within the educational service district.

6 (c) After considering the information from the public hearings, the
7 results of the review under section 4 of this act, and any other
8 information or considerations, the commission shall submit the final
9 comprehensive school district reorganization plan to the superintendent
10 of public instruction, the governor, and the legislature by December 1,
11 2016, as provided in subsection (3) of this section.

12 (3) The comprehensive school district reorganization plan shall
13 consist of two parts, each of which shall be submitted separately in
14 the form of proposed legislation:

15 (a) Part A of the plan shall be a list of the recommended school
16 districts and educational service districts and their respective
17 boundaries. Except for amendments to correct technical errors or
18 omissions, the legislation implementing part A of the plan as submitted
19 by the commission may be amended only if approved by a two-thirds vote
20 of each house of the legislature; and

21 (b) Part B of the plan shall be recommended procedures and
22 timelines for implementation of the reorganization plan, including but
23 not limited to:

24 (i) A phased-in implementation schedule;

25 (ii) Procedures and timelines for determination, adjustment, and
26 transfer of assets and liabilities among school districts, including
27 bonded indebtedness;

28 (iii) Procedures and timelines for determination and election of
29 school district and educational service district boards of directors,
30 which shall include a transition period for any reorganized school
31 districts of up to two years, during which time all previous school
32 district boards of directors of the reorganized districts shall
33 continue to have governing responsibilities until a single board is
34 elected;

35 (iv) A process and a limited time frame for school districts to
36 appeal or propose an alternative to their reorganization as provided
37 under section 4 of this act; and

1 (v) Amendments to or temporary suspension of the provisions of this
2 chapter, chapter 28A.310 RCW, and other laws that are necessary to
3 implement the reorganization plan and also provide an ongoing process
4 for management of school district organization and boundary issues
5 after the plan has been implemented.

6 (4) Nothing in this section requires consolidation or closure of
7 high schools or other schools. Decisions regarding the disposition of
8 schools rest with school district boards of directors.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 44.28 RCW
10 to read as follows:

11 The joint committee shall conduct an independent review of the
12 comprehensive plan developed under section 2 of this act to assure that
13 the proposed plan is based on and follows to the maximum extent
14 possible the objective criteria adopted by the commission on statewide
15 school district reorganization. The joint committee shall submit a
16 report of its findings, along with recommendations for any changes to
17 the plan that would improve its alignment with the criteria, to the
18 commission on statewide school district reorganization by September 1,
19 2016.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.315
21 RCW to read as follows:

22 (1) School districts whose organization is changed by a
23 reorganization plan adopted by the legislature under section 3 of this
24 act may appeal the reorganization to the commission on statewide school
25 district reorganization. An appeal that affects the organization of
26 more than one district must be submitted jointly by all affected
27 districts and must propose an alternative organization for
28 consideration by the commission. No school district may submit more
29 than one appeal under this section. The commission shall adopt rules
30 establishing the procedures, criteria, and time frame for consideration
31 and determination of appeals, including a deadline for school districts
32 to submit an appeal, based on the legislation enacted under section
33 3(3)(b) of this act. If the commission sustains an appeal under this
34 section, the commission shall order implementation of the alternative
35 organization of the school districts as submitted in the appeal.

1 (2) As an alternative to a reorganization adopted by the
2 legislature under section 3 of this act, school districts may submit
3 for consideration by the commission on statewide school district
4 reorganization a proposal to achieve significant efficiencies and
5 reductions in operating costs through the consolidation of services.
6 Consolidated services may include but are not limited to joint
7 transportation or food service operating agreements, consolidated
8 administration, joint use of facilities, or joint delivery and
9 management of special services. The proposal must be in the form of a
10 memorandum of understanding signed by the school directors of each
11 participating school district. The proposal must also include the
12 proposed organization of the school districts submitting the proposal.
13 The commission may approve an agreement under this subsection (2) only
14 if the school districts demonstrate significant efficiencies and
15 reductions in operating costs under the proposal. The commission shall
16 adopt rules establishing the procedures, criteria, and time frame for
17 consideration and approval of agreements, including a definition of
18 "significant efficiencies and reductions in operating costs," based on
19 the legislation enacted under section 3(3)(b) of this act. If the
20 commission approves a proposal under this section, the commission shall
21 order implementation of the memorandum of understanding and
22 implementation of the organization proposed by the participating school
23 districts.

24 (3) Decisions and orders of the commission on statewide school
25 district reorganization under this section must be filed with the
26 office of the superintendent of public instruction, the office of the
27 state auditor, appropriate county officials, and the legislature.

28 NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. (1) Section 1 of this act expires January 1,
29 2014, if the superintendent of public instruction files a finding with
30 the chief clerk of the house of representatives, the secretary of the
31 senate, and the office of the code reviser as of January 1, 2014,
32 declaring that the reorganization initiative under section 1 of this
33 act has not resulted in sufficient cost savings and efficiencies.

34 (2) Sections 2 through 5 of this act take effect January 1, 2014,
35 only if the superintendent of public instruction files a finding with
36 the chief clerk of the house of representatives, the secretary of the

1 senate, and the office of the code reviser as of January 1, 2014,
2 declaring that the reorganization initiative under section 1 of this
3 act has not resulted in sufficient cost savings and efficiencies.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** If legislation submitted by the commission
5 on statewide school district reorganization as provided under section
6 3(3)(a) of this act is not signed into law before June 30, 2018,
7 sections 2 through 5 of this act expire July 1, 2018.

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