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SENATE BILL 6048

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senators Oemig, Jarrett, McAuliffe, Hobbs, McDermott, Franklin, Kohl-Welles, and Haugen

Read first time 02/18/09. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to education; and adding a new section to chapter  
2 28A.150 RCW.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.150  
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) Public education in Washington state has evolved since the  
7 enactment of the Washington basic education act of 1977. Decisions by  
8 the courts have played a part in this evolution, as have studies and  
9 research about education practices and education funding. The  
10 legislature finds ample evidence of a need for continuing to refine the  
11 program of basic education that is funded by the state and delivered by  
12 school districts.

13 (2) In enacting this legislation, the legislature intends to  
14 continue to review, evaluate, and revise the definition and funding of  
15 basic education in order to continue to fulfill the state obligation  
16 under Article IX of the state Constitution to define and fund a program  
17 of basic education for children residing in the state and attending  
18 public schools.

1           (3) The legislature also intends to fulfill the state's obligation  
2 under Article IX to establish a general and uniform system of public  
3 schools and build upon the actions previously taken by the legislature  
4 to address the inequities that exist in the current system. However,  
5 the legislature finds that in some instances providing general and  
6 uniform educational opportunity requires tailoring basic education to  
7 reflect certain needs and circumstances of each school district,  
8 including district size and certain student characteristics. It is the  
9 intent of the legislature to address these differences using a rational  
10 basis for the differences in order to promote equity and uniformity of  
11 educational opportunity.

12           (4) The legislature finds that while the state has the  
13 responsibility to provide for a general and uniform system of public  
14 schools, there is also a need for some diversity in the public school  
15 system. A successful system of public education must permit some  
16 variation among school districts outside the basic education provided  
17 for by the state to respond to and reflect the unique desires of local  
18 communities. The opportunity for local communities to invest in  
19 enriched education programs promotes support for local public schools.  
20 Further, the ability of local school districts to experiment with  
21 enriched programs can inform the legislature's long-term evolution of  
22 the definition of basic education. Therefore, local levy authority  
23 remains an important component of the overall finance system in support  
24 of the public schools even though it is outside the state's obligation  
25 for basic education.

26           (5) For practical and educational reasons, wholesale change of the  
27 program of basic education and the funding formulas to support it  
28 cannot occur instantaneously. The legislature intends to build upon  
29 the previous efforts of the legislature and the work of the basic  
30 education task force, the state board of education, the professional  
31 educator standards board, and others. However, an implementation  
32 strategy must be determined for the instructional program; financial  
33 experts must develop the details of the funding formulas that are based  
34 on prototypical schools; changes to the systems of educator  
35 certification, evaluation, mentoring, and compensation must be  
36 established; a data and reporting system must be designed; the capacity  
37 of districts to help their schools improve student achievement must be  
38 increased; and a system in which the state and school districts share

1 accountability for achieving state educational standards requires new  
2 mechanisms that will clearly define the relationship of expectations  
3 for the state, school districts, and schools. As development of these  
4 formulas, processes, and systems progresses, the legislature shall  
5 monitor the progress. The legislature intends to begin a schedule for  
6 implementation of a redefined program of basic education and the  
7 resources necessary to support it, beginning in the 2011-12 school  
8 year. It is the legislature's intent that when the system has the  
9 capacity to fully implement these enhancements they will be included in  
10 a definition and funding of basic education.

11 (6) It is the further intent of the legislature to also address  
12 additional issues that are of importance to the legislature but are not  
13 part of basic education.

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