Complete Text

Initiative Measure 1351

AN ACT Relating to lowering class sizes and increasing school staff to provide all students the opportunity for a quality education; amending RCW 28A.150.260; adding a new section to chapter 28A.150 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** This initiative concerns reducing the number of students per class in grades K-12. Washington ranks forty-seventh out of fifty states in the nation in the number of students per class. The voters understand that reduced class sizes are critical for students especially to learn technical skills such as mathematics, science, technology, and other skills critical for success in the new economy.

It is the intent of the voters that reduction in class sizes be achieved by the legislature funding annual investments to lower class sizes and to increase school staffing in order to provide every student with the opportunities to receive a high quality basic education as well as improve student performance and graduation rates.

A teacher's ability to individualize instruction, provide timely feedback to students and families, and keep students actively engaged in learning activities is substantially increased with smaller class sizes. Students in smaller classes have shown improved attendance, greater academic growth, and higher scores on achievement tests; and students from disadvantaged groups experience two to three times the average gains of their peers. Smaller class sizes will provide an equitable opportunity for all students to reach their potential and will assist in closing the achievement gap.

In order to comply with the constitutional requirement to amply fund basic education and with the Washington supreme court decision in *McCleary v. the State of Washington*, it is the intent of the voters to implement with fidelity chapter 548, Laws of 2009 and chapter 236, Laws of 2010. These laws revised the definition of the program of basic education, established new methods for distributing state funds to school districts to support this program of basic education, and established a process where the quality education council and technical working groups would make recommendations as to the level of resources that would be required to achieve the state's defined program of basic education by 2018.

This measure would create smaller class sizes for grades K-12 over a four-year period with priority to schools with high levels of student poverty. These annual improvements are to be considered basic education funding that may be used to assist the Washington supreme court to determine the adequacy of progress in addressing the state's paramount duty in accordance with the *McCleary* decision. State funding would be provided based on a reduction of K-3 class size to seventeen and grade 4-12 class size to twenty-five; and for schools with more than fifty percent of students in poverty, that is, more than fifty percent of students were eligible for free and reduced-price meals in the prior school year, a reduction of K-3 class size to fifteen, grade 4 to twenty-two, and grade 5-12 class size to twenty-three. The measure would also provide funding for increased school teaching and student support including librarians, counselors, school nurses, teaching assistants, and other critical staff necessary for the safe and effective operation of a school, to meet individual student needs, and to ensure all required school functions can be performed by appropriately trained personnel.

Sec. 2. RCW 28A.150.260 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 27 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

The purpose of this section is to provide for the allocation of state funding that the legislature deems necessary to support school districts in offering the minimum instructional program of basic education under RCW 28A.150.220. The allocation shall be determined as follows:

(1) The governor shall and the superintendent of public instruction may recommend to the legislature a formula for the distribution of a basic education instructional allocation for each common school district.

(2) The distribution formula under this section shall be for allocation purposes only. Except as required for class size reduction funding provided under subsection (4)(f) of this section and as may be required under chapter 28A.155,

28A.165, 28A.180, or 28A.185 RCW, or federal laws and regulations, nothing in this section requires school districts to use basic education instructional funds to implement a particular instructional approach or service. Nothing in this section requires school districts to maintain a particular classroom teacher-to-student ratio or other staff-to-student ratio or to use allocated funds to pay for particular types or classifications of staff. Nothing in this section entitles an individual teacher to a particular teacher planning period.

(3)(a) To the extent the technical details of the formula have been adopted by the legislature and except when specifically provided as a school district allocation, the distribution formula for the basic education instructional allocation shall be based on minimum staffing and nonstaff costs the legislature deems necessary to support instruction and operations in prototypical schools serving high, middle, and elementary school students as provided in this section. The use of prototypical schools for the distribution formula does not constitute legislative intent that schools should be operated or structured in a similar fashion as the prototypes. Prototypical schools illustrate the level of resources needed to operate a school of a particular size with particular types and grade levels of students using commonly understood terms and inputs, such as class size, hours of instruction, and various categories of school staff. It is the intent that the funding allocations to school districts be adjusted from the school prototypes based on the actual number of annual average full-time equivalent students in each grade level at each school in the district and not based on the grade-level configuration of the school to the extent that data is available. The allocations shall be further adjusted from the school prototypes with minimum allocations for small schools and to reflect other factors identified in the omnibus appropriations act.

(b) For the purposes of this section, prototypical schools are defined as follows:

(i) A prototypical high school has six hundred average annual full-time equivalent students in grades nine through twelve;

(ii) A prototypical middle school has four hundred thirty-two average annual full-time equivalent students in grades seven and eight; and

(iii) A prototypical elementary school has four hundred average annual full-time equivalent students in grades kindergarten through six.

(4)(a) The minimum allocation for each level of prototypical school shall be based on the number of full-time equivalent classroom teachers needed to provide instruction over the minimum required annual instructional hours under RCW 28A.150.220 and provide at least one teacher planning period per school day, and based on the following general education average class size of full-time equivalent students per teacher:

	General education average class size
Grades K-3	((~~25.23~~)) 17.0
Grade 4	((~~27.00~~)) 25.0
Grades 5-6	((~~27.00~~)) 25.0
Grades 7-8	((~~28.53~~)) 25.0
Grades 9-12	((~~28.74~~)) 25.0

(b) During the 2011-2013 biennium and beginning with schools with the highest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals in the prior school year, the general education average class size for grades K-3 shall be reduced until the average class size funded under this subsection (4) is no more than 17.0 full-time equivalent students per teacher beginning in the 2017-18 school year.

(c) The minimum allocation for each prototypical middle and high school shall also provide for full-time equivalent classroom teachers based on the following number of full-time equivalent students per teacher in career and technical education:

	Career and technical education average class size
Approved career and technical education offered at the middle school and high school level	((~~26.57~~)) 19.0
Skill center programs meeting the standards established by the office of the superintendent of public instruction	((~~22.76~~)) 16.0

(d) In addition, the omnibus appropriations act shall at a minimum specify((:
~~(i) A high poverty average class size in schools where more than fifty percent of the students are eligible for free and reduced price meals; and~~
~~(ii)~~)) a specialty average class size for laboratory science, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate courses.

(e) For each level of prototypical school at which more than fifty percent of the students were eligible for free and reduced-price meals in the prior school year, the superintendent shall allocate funding based on the following average class size of full-time equivalent students per teacher:

	General education average class size in high poverty
Grades K-3	15.0
Grade 4	22.0
Grades 5-6	23.0
Grades 7-8	23.0
Grades 9-12	23.0

(f)(i) Funding for average class sizes in this subsection (4) shall be provided only to the extent of, and proportionate to, the school district's demonstrated actual average class size, up to the funded class sizes.
(ii) Districts that demonstrate capital facility needs that prevent them from reducing actual class sizes to funded levels, may use funding in this subsection (4) for school based-personnel who provide direct services to students. Districts that use this funding for purposes other than reducing actual class sizes must annually report the number and dollar value for each type of personnel funded by school and grade level.
(iii) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall develop rules to implement this subsection (4).

(5) The minimum allocation for each level of prototypical school shall include allocations necessary for the safe and effective operation of a school, to meet individual student needs, and to ensure all required school functions can be performed by appropriately trained personnel, for the following types of staff in addition to classroom teachers:

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Principals, assistant principals, and other certificated building-level administrators	((~~1.253~~)) 1.3	((~~1.353~~)) 1.4	((~~1.880~~)) 1.9
Teacher librarians, a function that includes information literacy, technology, and media to support school library media programs	((~~0.663~~)) 1.0	((~~0.519~~)) 1.0	((~~0.523~~)) 1.0
Health and social services:			
School nurses	((~~0.076~~)) 0.585	((~~0.060~~)) 0.888	((~~0.096~~)) 0.824
Social workers	((~~0.042~~)) 0.311	((~~0.006~~)) 0.088	((~~0.015~~)) 0.127
Psychologists	((~~0.017~~)) 0.104	((~~0.002~~)) 0.024	((~~0.007~~)) 0.049
Guidance counselors, a function that includes parent outreach and graduation advising	((~~0.493~~)) 0.50	((~~1.116~~)) 2.0	((~~1.909~~)) 3.5
Teaching assistance, including any aspect of educational instructional services provided by classified employees	((~~0.936~~)) 2.0	((~~0.700~~)) 1.0	((~~0.652~~)) 1.0
Office support and other noninstructional aides	((~~2.012~~)) 3.0	((~~2.325~~)) 3.5	((~~3.269~~)) 3.5
Custodians	((~~1.657~~)) 1.7	((~~1.942~~)) 2.0	((~~2.965~~)) 3.0
Classified staff providing student and staff safety	((~~0.079~~)) 0.0	((~~0.092~~)) 0.7	((~~0.141~~)) 1.3
Parent involvement coordinators	((~~0.00~~)) 1.0	((~~0.00~~)) 1.0	((~~0.00~~)) 1.0

(6)(a) The minimum staffing allocation for each school district to provide district-wide support services shall be allocated per one thousand annual average full-time equivalent students in grades K-12 as follows:

	Staff per 1,000 K-12 students
Technology	((~~0.628~~)) 2.8
Facilities, maintenance, and grounds	((~~1.813~~)) 4.0
Warehouse, laborers, and mechanics	((~~0.332~~)) 1.9

(b) The minimum allocation of staff units for each school district to support certificated and classified staffing of central administration shall be 5.30 percent of the staff units generated under subsections (4)(a) and (b) and (5) of this section and (a) of this subsection.

(7) The distribution formula shall include staffing allocations to school districts for career and technical education and skill center administrative and other school-level certificated staff, as specified in the omnibus appropriations act.

(8)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the minimum allocation for each school district shall include allocations per annual average full-time equivalent student for the following materials, supplies, and operating costs, to be adjusted for inflation from the 2008-09 school year:

	Per annual average full-time equivalent student in grades K-12
Technology	$54.43
Utilities and insurance	$147.90
Curriculum and textbooks	$58.44
Other supplies and library materials	$124.07
Instructional professional development for certified and classified staff	$9.04
Facilities maintenance	$73.27
Security and central office	$50.76

(b) During the 2011-2013 biennium, the minimum allocation for maintenance, supplies, and operating costs shall be increased as specified in the omnibus appropriations act. The following allocations, adjusted for inflation from the 2007-08 school year, are provided in the 2015-16 school year, after which the allocations shall be adjusted annually for inflation as specified in the omnibus appropriations act:

	Per annual average full-time equivalent student in grades K-12
Technology	$113.80
Utilities and insurance	$309.21
Curriculum and textbooks	$122.17
Other supplies and library materials	$259.39
Instructional professional development for certificated and classified staff	$18.89
Facilities maintenance	$153.18
Security and central office administration	$106.12

(9) In addition to the amounts provided in subsection (8) of this section, the omnibus appropriations act shall provide an amount based on full-time equivalent student enrollment in each of the following:

(a) Exploratory career and technical education courses for students in grades seven through twelve;

(b) Laboratory science courses for students in grades nine through twelve;

(c) Preparatory career and technical education courses for students in grades nine through twelve offered in a high school; and

(d) Preparatory career and technical education courses for students in grades eleven and twelve offered through a skill center.

(10) In addition to the allocations otherwise provided under this section, amounts shall be provided to support the following programs and services:

(a) To provide supplemental instruction and services for underachieving students through the learning assistance program under RCW 28A.165.005 through 28A.165.065, allocations shall be based on the district percentage of students in grades K-12 who were eligible for free or reduced-price meals in the prior school year. The minimum

allocation for the program shall provide for each level of prototypical school resources to provide, on a statewide average, 1.5156 hours per week in extra instruction with a class size of fifteen learning assistance program students per teacher.

(b) To provide supplemental instruction and services for students whose primary language is other than English, allocations shall be based on the head count number of students in each school who are eligible for and enrolled in the transitional bilingual instruction program under RCW 28A.180.010 through 28A.180.080. The minimum allocation for each level of prototypical school shall provide resources to provide, on a statewide average, 4.7780 hours per week in extra instruction with fifteen transitional bilingual instruction program students per teacher. Notwithstanding other provisions of this subsection (10), the actual per-student allocation may be scaled to provide a larger allocation for students needing more intensive intervention and a commensurate reduced allocation for students needing less intensive intervention, as detailed in the omnibus appropriations act.

(c) To provide additional allocations to support programs for highly capable students under RCW 28A.185.010 through 28A.185.030, allocations shall be based on two and three hundred fourteen one-thousandths percent of each school district's full-time equivalent basic education enrollment. The minimum allocation for the programs shall provide resources to provide, on a statewide average, 2.1590 hours per week in extra instruction with fifteen highly capable program students per teacher.

(11) The allocations under subsections (4)(a) and (b), (5), (6), and (8) of this section shall be enhanced as provided under RCW 28A.150.390 on an excess cost basis to provide supplemental instructional resources for students with disabilities.

(12)(a) For the purposes of allocations for prototypical high schools and middle schools under subsections (4) and (10) of this section that are based on the percent of students in the school who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, the actual percent of such students in a school shall be adjusted by a factor identified in the omnibus appropriations act to reflect underreporting of free and reduced-price meal eligibility among middle and high school students.

(b) Allocations or enhancements provided under subsections (4), (7), and (9) of this section for exploratory and preparatory career and technical education courses shall be provided only for courses approved by the office of the superintendent of public instruction under chapter 28A.700 RCW.

(13)(a) This formula for distribution of basic education funds shall be reviewed biennially by the superintendent and governor. The recommended formula shall be subject to approval, amendment or rejection by the legislature.

(b) In the event the legislature rejects the distribution formula recommended by the governor, without adopting a new distribution formula, the distribution formula for the previous school year shall remain in effect.

(c) The enrollment of any district shall be the annual average number of full-time equivalent students and part-time students as provided in RCW 28A.150.350, enrolled on the first school day of each month, including students who are in attendance pursuant to RCW 28A.335.160 and 28A.225.250 who do not reside within the servicing school district. The definition of full-time equivalent student shall be determined by rules of the superintendent of public instruction and shall be included as part of the superintendent's biennial budget request. The definition shall be based on the minimum instructional hour offerings required under RCW 28A.150.220. Any revision of the present definition shall not take effect until approved by the house ways and means committee and the senate ways and means committee.

(d) The office of financial management shall make a monthly review of the superintendent's reported full-time equivalent students in the common schools in conjunction with RCW 43.62.050.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.150 RCW to read as follows:

In order to make measurable progress toward implementing the provisions of section 2, chapter ..., Laws of 2015 (section 2 of this act) by September 1, 2017, the legislature shall increase state funding allocations under RCW 28A.150.260 according to the following schedule:

(1) For the 2015-2017 biennium, funding allocations shall be no less than fifty percent of the difference between the funding necessary to support the numerical values under RCW 28A.150.260 as of September 1, 2013, and the funding necessary to support the numerical values under section 2, chapter ..., Laws of 2015 (section 2 of this act), with priority for additional funding provided during this biennium for the highest poverty schools and school districts;

(2) By the end of the 2017-2019 biennium and thereafter, funding allocations shall be no less than the funding necessary to support the numerical values under section 2, chapter ..., Laws of 2015 (section 2 of this act).

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act may be known and cited as the lower class sizes for a quality education act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Section 2 of this act takes effect September 1, 2018.

--- END ---