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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/31/10
LAST UPDATED 02/05/10 **HB** _____

SPONSOR Asbill

SHORT TITLE School District Budget Flexibility **SB** 97

ANALYST Hoffmann/Aguilar

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY10	FY11		
	None		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SJM 12, SB 87, HB164 and SB92

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY10	FY11	FY12	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		See narrative				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 97 provides that the Secretary of the Public Education Department may waive certain requirements of the Public School Code and rules promulgated in accordance with the code in years 2009-10 through 2011-12 relating to individual class load, teaching load, length of school day, staffing patterns, subject areas and purchases of instructional materials. The bill requires the Public Education Department to monitor the waivers and report to the Legislative Education Study Committee and Legislative Finance Committee any adverse affects on student learning.

The legislation also contains an emergency clause.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Many of these items, particularly the reduction in class loads, staffing patterns, and purchases of instructional materials could have a significant positive impact on district operating costs if implemented. The extent of the fiscal impact will vary depending on the degree to which districts implement changes.

The PED reports that if Senate Bill 97 is approved, additional financial resources may be required to monitor the changes in class loads, length of school day (instructional hours), staffing patterns, and purchases of instructional materials.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PED notes that for schools in improvement status, waiving the requirements dealing with class load, teaching load, length of the school day, staffing patterns and subject areas could have a negative impact on student achievement, particularly with students in need of additional assistance, instructional time, and individualized interventions.

While suspending portions of the Public School Code regarding class sizes and teaching loads is not an ideal situation, modest increases should be manageable for teachers and support staff for a limited period of time. Current research suggests that smaller classes have little benefit for students until class loads are reduced significantly to about 8 to 10 students per teacher although some adverse effect is noted if class sizes get too large. The secretary will need to actively monitor class sizes to make certain they remain reasonable.

With statewide Title I and IDEA-B allocations from the federal stimulus fund exceeding \$90 million, it appears that schools have sufficient resources to purchase instructional materials in spite of reductions to the instructional materials fund. Suspending rules regarding the purchase of instructional materials and the adoption cycle should not have an undesirable effect on schools.

Parent and community involvement in these local decisions will be critical as the local school boards provide oversight and leadership during these times of fiscal challenges.

RELATIONSHIP

Senate Bill 97 relates to the following proposed legislation:
Senate Joint Memorial 12 “Study Various School Calendars”,
Senate Bill 87 “Delay School Year & Day Length Changes”,
House Bill 164 “CLASS & TEACHING LOAD INCREASE,” and
Senate Bill 92 “Delay School Year and Day Length Changes”

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The Secretary of Education can currently waive class load, length of school day, and instructional materials requirements under our current waiver procedures. If an individual school or district requests exemption from the current regulations in these areas, a process already exists in the waiver process. While providing temporary exemption, the PED can still retain oversight and counsel with the school or district about options in each situation that could ensure the quality of instruction continues as before.