

THIS SUMMARY WAS WRITTEN AND USED FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE THE MANDATORY EDUCATION BILL BECAME LAW.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE
EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN

The Washington constitution states that it is a duty of the State to educate all children. However, existing state legislation does not provide for the education of all handicapped children. In December 1969, four Seattle mothers met to correct this deficiency through the initiation of new legislation.

According to present statutes, school districts may provide special education programs for handicapped children, but this is not mandatory. A school district choosing to institute a special education program is entitled to "excess cost" funding (i.e., it can be reimbursed by the state for monies exceeding basic education costs). Many districts, however, have not established programs for handicapped children. As a result, special education programs vary from district to district, and many handicapped children are denied a public school education.

With the addition of two U. of W. law students to research legislation of Washington and other states, the group formally became the "Education for All" committee. Their first official action was to arrange for a survey of the educational status of Washington handicapped children. The survey included the collection of data on the number of handicapped children not receiving a formal education; number of children enrolled

in regular classes, but on special-education-class waiting lists; ages of the children; and the nature of their handicaps. The survey was arranged through the governor's budget office, Program Planning and Fiscal Management.

The group of interested mothers first sought the opinion of the attorney general to clarify the question: In the state constitution, does the 'all' include handicapped children? The attorney general agreed that it did. The committee then had two choices: (1) to propose new legislation to make special education mandatory rather than optional; or (2) to challenge existing legislation in the courts. Because of the time and expense involved in a long court case, the first alternative was chosen.

The survey, conducted by the Departments of Public Instruction and Institutions, was completed in November 1970. The results showed that approximately 3,000 handicapped youngsters were not enrolled in any public school or private program. Some children are on waiting lists for special education classes. Some districts have no provisions for handicapped children. The survey demonstrated the need for more special education programs.

The Education for All committee then wrote a rough draft of the proposed mandatory-special-education bill. After researching past legislation and seeking advice and opinions of others in the field, the draft was updated and submitted to the legislature.

This bill states that a school district must provide an educational program for all handicapped children of common school age residing in its district. A school district will have three options. It can provide a special education program in its own public schools; contract with another district to serve these children; or contract with an agency to provide the necessary special education services.

The chances for passage of the bill appear excellent. The bill is by Executive request, by Department of Public Instruction request, and by the Joint Interim Committee on Education request. Senators Durkan and Metcalf are sponsoring it as Senate Bill 66, and Representatives Brouillet, Hoggins, Kirk and others are presenting the identical proposal as House Bill 90.

If the bill is passed by the legislature, school districts may begin implementation this biennium with the aid of \$5,000,000 set aside for this purpose in the governor's biennium budget. Sanctions, however, will not go into effect until 1973.

The citizens who served as originators of the legislation are:
Mrs. John (Evelyn) Chapman, Chairman
Mrs. Reese (Cecile) Lindquist
Mrs. Duane (Katie) Dolan
Mrs. Phillip (Janet) Jaggart
George Breck
William Dussault

Education FOR ALL

1970-71

The legislators and citizens who support Senate Bill 66 and House Bill 90 are large in number, impressive in the variety of political persuasions they represent and articulate in the case they present for the legislation which seeks to provide all handicapped children in the state with an appropriate education at public expense. An indication of its significance is the fact that it is being introduced into the current session of the Legislature by one, executive request, two, by department request and three, the Joint Interim Committee on Education. A long list of sponsors from both political parties representing many different philosophies are signers of the bill.

The Office of Public Instruction together with the Department of Institutions conducted a survey at the request of the Governor's fiscal office and at the urging of the citizens group which disclosed that 2800 handicapped children of common-school age in the state are not receiving an education of any kind. Governor Evans, in his budget request, has asked that 5 million dollars be set aside, specifically, for handicapped children who have no program available to them.

A citizens group whose original six members conceived the idea for the legislation (after receiving a favorable Attorney General's report on the constitutionality of their contention that all children are entitled to a tax supported education) began their sponsorship by contacting the Special Education Department of the Office of Public Instruction. Here they requested suggestions on practical aspects and means of implementing such legislation.

Carefully gathering support for their philosophy by making appearances at meetings of various clubs, agencies and organizations and now calling themselves EDUCATION FOR ALL, they appeared before the Student Health and Education Services Committee which is a sub-committee of the Joint Interim Committee on Education. The past six months has been a time of intensive work on the part of many advocates of the legislation which now has broad support.

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Organizations Contacted to support the Mandatory Education Bill

Washington Association of Retarded Children

State Association for the Blind

~~Speech and Hearing Limited~~

Easter Seal Society

Concerned Orthopedic Parents Judy Hoyman

Parent Action Council (Autistic) Mrs. John Griffin { 237-9377
PA 5-1337

Association of Children with Learning Disabilities Pattison La.2-4336

Washington Association of child Care Agencies

Cerebral Palsy

Orton Society (Learning Disability contact Lakeside)

Washington Education Association

Council for Exceptional Children

Washington Association of Administratorzs of Special Education

Advisory Committee to Special Education Dept of Public Instruction

United Way (Legislation)

Governors's Committee on Mental Health and Mental Retardation

County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Boards

League of Women Voters

Governor

Joint Education Committee of Legislature

State Department of Public Instruction