
SENATE BILL 6295

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Senators Kilmer, Rockefeller, Hobbs, Shin, Franklin, Marr, Rasmussen, Kastama, Kauffman, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Hatfield, Berkey, and Regala

Read first time 01/14/08. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to workplace-based electronically distributed
2 learning; adding new sections to chapter 28C.18 RCW; creating a new
3 section; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there are many
6 working adults in Washington that need additional postsecondary
7 educational opportunities to further develop their employability. The
8 legislature further finds that many of these people postpone or call
9 off their personal educational plans because they are busy working and
10 raising their families. Because the largest portion of our workforce
11 over the next thirty years is already employed but in need of skill
12 development, and because many low-wage, low-skilled, and mid-skilled
13 individuals cannot take advantage of postsecondary educational
14 opportunities as they currently exist, the legislature intends to
15 identify and test additional postsecondary educational opportunities
16 tailored to make postsecondary education accessible to working adults
17 through the use of campuses extended to include workplace-based
18 educational offerings.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 (1) The board shall identify and evaluate current national private
4 employer workplace-based educational programs with distance learning
5 components provided by public colleges and universities. The
6 evaluation shall include:

7 (a) A review of the literature and direct surveys of practitioners
8 about promising practices and net impact analysis;

9 (b) An initial determination of feasibility based on targeted
10 populations served, subject matter, and level of education;

11 (c) An overview of technological considerations and adult learning
12 strategies for distribution of learning to employer sites; and

13 (d) An overview of cost factors, including shared costs or co-
14 investments by public and private partners.

15 (2) The board shall report the results of the study and evaluation
16 to appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2008.

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

19 (1) The board shall use a matching fund strategy to select and
20 evaluate up to eight pilot projects operated by Washington institutions
21 of higher education. By September 2008, the board shall select up to
22 eight institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016
23 including at least four community or technical colleges to develop and
24 offer a pilot project providing employer workplace-based educational
25 programs with distance learning components. The board shall convene a
26 task force that includes representatives from the state board for
27 community and technical colleges and the higher education coordinating
28 board to select the participant institutions. At a minimum, the
29 criteria for selecting the educational institutions shall address:

30 (a) The ability to demonstrate a capacity to make a commitment of
31 resources to build and sustain a high quality program;

32 (b) The ability to readily engage faculty appropriately qualified
33 to develop and deliver a high quality curriculum;

34 (c) The ability to demonstrate demand for the proposed program from
35 a sufficient number of students within its service area to make the
36 program cost-effective and feasible to operate; and

1 (d) The identification of available employers under subsection (3)
2 of this section that demonstrate willingness to host an on-site program
3 either because they demand the level of education proposed within the
4 program or because they expect to accrue benefits of improved worker
5 retention and productivity from employee engagement in higher
6 education.

7 (2) Institutions of higher education may submit an application to
8 become a pilot college under this section. An institution of higher
9 education selected as a pilot college shall develop the curriculum for
10 and design and deliver courses. However, the programs developed under
11 this section are subject to approval by the state board for technical
12 and community colleges under RCW 28B.50.090 and by the higher education
13 coordinating board under RCW 28B.76.230.

14 (3) By September 2008, the board, in cooperation with the state
15 board for community and technical colleges and the higher education
16 coordinating board, shall select employers with the ability to offer
17 employment and workplace-based educational programs with distance
18 learning components in cooperation with the institutions selected under
19 subsection (1) of this section. The selection criteria shall address:

20 (a) Access to educational coursework and educational advice and
21 support for entry-level and semi-skilled workers, including paid and
22 unpaid release time, and adequate classroom space that is equipped
23 appropriately for the selected technological distance learning
24 methodologies to be used;

25 (b) On-site promotion and encouragement of worker participation,
26 including employee orientations, peer support and mentoring,
27 educational tutoring, and career planning;

28 (c) Allowance of a reasonable level of worker choice in the type
29 and level of coursework available;

30 (d) Commitment to work with college partner to ensure the relevance
31 of coursework to the skill demands and potential career pathways of the
32 employer host site and other participating employers; and

33 (e) Willingness to participate in an evaluation of the pilot to
34 analyze the net benefit to the employer host site, other employer
35 partners, the worker-students, and the colleges.

36 (4) In firms with union representation, the establishment of a
37 labor-management committee to oversee design and participation shall be
38 mandatory.

1 (5) Joint applications from institutions of higher education and
2 private employers shall be encouraged.

3 (6) The board shall evaluate the pilot project and report the
4 outcomes to students and employers by December 1, 2012.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 The board may receive and expend federal funds and private gifts or
8 grants, which funds must be expended in accordance with any conditions
9 upon which the funds are contingent.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 2 through 4 of this act expire
11 December 31, 2012.

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