

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1808

As Reported by House Committee On:

Higher Education
Education Appropriations

Title: An act relating to an interdisciplinary work group with faculty from a paramedic training program and an associate degree in nursing program.

Brief Description: Creating an interdisciplinary work group with faculty from a paramedic training program and an associate degree nursing program.

Sponsors: Representatives Hinkle, Morrell, Bailey, Green and Kelley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/11/09, 2/13/09 [DPA];
Education Appropriations: 2/25/09, 2/26/09 [DPS(APPE)].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to convene a faculty workgroup that includes faculty from a paramedic program, an associate nursing program, a four-year nursing program, and representatives from the Washington Center for Nursing and the Washington State Nursing Association to identify course equivalencies or skill competencies between paramedic training programs and nursing programs.
- Requires the workgroup to report their findings to the SBCTC by July 1, 2010.
- Requires the expiration of the workgroup on December 1, 2010.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Carlyle, Driscoll, Haler, Hasegawa and White.

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

Training Programs.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has approved 24 community and technical colleges to offer practical nursing programs (LPN).

The Department of Health (DOH) approves paramedic training programs currently offered at Bellingham, Spokane, Tacoma, Clark, and Columbia Basin Community Colleges culminating in the award of either a certificate or an Associate of Applied Science degree. The DOH has also approved entities like fire departments to offer paramedic training, however, for these programs students must already be trained as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or firefighter.

Equivalencies and Competencies.

"Course equivalency" is a term that describes how a course offered by one college or university relates to a course offered by another. If a course is viewed as equal or better than the course offered by the receiving college or university, the course can be counted as equivalent and can be used to meet graduation requirements. Faculty typically review course syllabi, skill competencies, and learning outcomes in determining whether a course is equivalent to another.

"Competencies" or "skill competencies" are the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a student should be able to demonstrate after completing a course of study. For instance, students who complete LPN programs must be able to evaluate heart rate patterns, and assess and monitor peripheral blood pressure. In some cases, competencies are used as the basis of determining course equivalency.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The SBCTC must identify a community or technical college that offers both a paramedic training program and a nursing program. Faculty from both programs, a four-year nursing program, the Washington Center for Nursing, and the Washington State Nursing Association must form an interdisciplinary workgroup to identify course equivalencies and skill competencies between the two programs. The workgroup must report its findings to the SBCTC by December 1, 2009.

The SBCTC may use the findings from the workgroup as the basis for statewide policies governing articulation between paramedic and nursing programs.

Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The membership of the interdisciplinary work group is expanded to include faculty from a four-year nursing program, a representative from the Washington Center for Nursing, and a representative from the Washington State Nursing Association.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 2009.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There are many people who have been paramedics for awhile with a lot of street knowledge. We can capitalize on that knowledge if we can figure out a way to create an expedited curriculum to help paramedics transition into the nursing profession. There is already an interest within the state system of community and technical colleges to begin looking at this issue. There is clearly a demand out there and the reporting requirement in the bill will ensure that we continue working on the issue. It is also important to note that the similarities between the programs will be accomplished through identifying skill competencies rather than course equivalencies.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hinkle, prime sponsor; and Pat Ward, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Education Appropriations be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Sullivan, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox, Haler, Hunter, Kagi, Probst, Quall, Rolfes and Wallace.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Carlyle.

Staff: Debbie Driver (786-7143)

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Education Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Higher Education:

An expiration date for the section is added, resulting in the expiration of the workgroup after the report is completed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The state has a need for future health care providers, including nurses. Finding, training, and graduating nurse candidates is a critical issue in higher education. Currently, many paramedics who have skills, experience, and training that translate well to a nursing career are interested in moving into that career. The job of a paramedic is stressful and often emotional and leads to many trained paramedic professionals leaving their jobs. These individuals are well suited for nursing careers and this bill would require nurse and paramedic faculty to work together to develop a fast-track curriculum. Developing curriculum and a process would provide a route for paramedics to move into nursing.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hinkle, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.