

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2684

As of February 17, 2010

Title: An act relating to establishing opportunity centers at community colleges.

Brief Description: Establishing opportunity centers at community colleges.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Kenney, Sullivan, Liias, Hasegawa, Simpson, Nelson, Goodman and Chase).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/10/10, 61-36.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/17/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Alicia Kinne (786-7784)

Background: The Legislature's Capital Budget of 2003 called for the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to conduct a study, with input from an advisory committee, on the feasibility and benefits of establishing one-stop satellite offices co-locating the Employment Security Department (ESD) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) on community college campuses to improve service delivery to shared clients.

The SBCTC formed an advisory committee and worked throughout 2004 to conduct focus groups and interviews with various stakeholder groups. The advisory committee recommended moving forward with a pilot at North Seattle Community College. Based on their study, the advisory group indicated that this co-location model had the potential to use state resources more effectively and to enhance service delivery through the integration of services needed by working-age adults.

Summary of Bill: An Opportunity Education and Employment Center (Center) is established within the Seattle Community College district. The Center will house various educational and social service providers that will integrate access to employment, counseling, and public benefit programs as well as education, training, financial aid, and counseling offered through community colleges. The Center is required to form partnerships that will enhance service provision.

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.

The Center is required to provide the following services: ESD and Workforce Development Council (WDC) WorkSource services; job listing, referral, and placement; job coaching; employment counseling, testing, and career planning; Unemployment Insurance claim filing assistance; cash grant programs run by the DSHS; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; housing assistance; child support assistance; child care subsidies; WorkFirst and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; state general assistance and supplemental security income facilitation; vocational rehabilitation services and referrals; Medicaid and medical services; alcoholism and drug addiction treatment and support act referrals; case management and mental health referrals; community college financial aid; support services; college counseling services related to career pathways and basic-skills resources for English language learners; high school completion; and adult basic education.

The Chancellor of the Seattle Community College district must convene a work group that is charged with governing the Center. The work group must include representatives of the King County WDC, North Seattle Community College, the ESD, and the DSHS. The work group is tasked with determining protocols and policies for service delivery and general operation, developing cross-agency training for agency employees located at the Center, and developing a plan to establish a common information-technology framework that could facilitate interagency access to files and information, including any common application and screening systems that facilitate access. The plan developed by the work group must be accomplished within existing resources and to the extent federal privacy laws allow.

By December 1, 2010, the SBCTC must make recommendations on the location of a new Center. If future Centers are created, they will be governed by the work group.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill streamlines services to provide better customer support. The Opportunity Centers will be responsive to community and student needs. They help student completion by locating all services in a single location. This bill allows our state to move forward in workforce education in an innovative and effective way. The Opportunity Center's address goal four of the Workforce Board's workforce plan.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Tina Bloomer, SBCTC; Madeleine Thompson, Workforce Board; Darcy Pariso, Steve Miller, North Seattle Community College.