

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2913

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 24, 2010
Ways & Means, March 1, 2010

Title: An act relating to authorizing innovative interdistrict cooperative high school programs.

Brief Description: Authorizing innovative interdistrict cooperative high school programs.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Haigh, Priest, Quall, Haler, Kessler, Kagi, Nealey, Finn, Maxwell, Sullivan and Kenney).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/10, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/24/10 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/27/10, 3/01/10 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; King, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Gordon, Hobbs, Holmquist, McDermott, Roach and Tom.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, McDermott, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller and Schoesler.

Staff: Elise Greef (786-7708)

Background: There are 46 school districts that do not offer high school for their resident students. These are known as nonhigh districts. Students in nonhigh districts enroll in neighboring high school districts when they reach the grade levels not offered in their home district. In 2008-09 there were 3,566 full-time equivalent students from nonhigh districts who attended school in another district under these provisions.

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 high school districts report the enrollment of the nonhigh district students and receive all state funding allocations for those students. The nonhigh district makes a payment to the high school district to cover the per-student cost of any local levies in the high school district. If there are no local levies, there is no nonhigh payment.

Summary of Bill: Two or more nonhigh school districts may form an interdistrict cooperative to offer an Innovation Academy Cooperative (Academy) for their resident high school students. Student enrollment in an Academy is optional. For students in the participating nonhigh districts who attend school in a high school district instead of the Academy, current laws regarding nonhigh payments and capital facilities payments still apply. State basic education funding allocations for the Academy are based on small high school allocations under the appropriations act. One of the participating districts reports the students enrolled in an Academy for purposes of state funding allocations, but the levy bases of all participating districts are adjusted to reflect each district's proportional share of enrollment.

An Academy is defined as a high school program with one or more of the following characteristics:

- interdisciplinary curriculum and instruction organized into subject-focused academies, with encouragement for an initial focus on academies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM);
- a combination of service delivery models, including alternative learning experiences, online learning, work-based learning, experiential and field-based learning, and direct instruction offered at multiple and varying locations;
- intensive and accelerated learning to enable students to complete credits in a short time period; and
- creative scheduling and use of existing school or community facilities to minimize costs and maximize access for students who may be geographically dispersed.

The nonhigh districts must also work with community and technical colleges and four-year higher education institutions to expand the options offered through an Academy.

Nonhigh districts proposing to offer an Academy must submit a copy of the proposed interdistrict cooperative agreement and an operating and instructional plan for the Academy to the Superintendent for Public Instruction (SPI) for review. The purpose of the review is to provide technical assistance and advice and to assure the agreement addresses issues such as data reporting, correct calculation of payments, and proper budgeting. The review must also assure that the program enables students to earn high school credit and complete a high school diploma. Approval of the agreement and plans by the SPI is required before an Academy begins operation.

The SPI must conduct a review of the implementation of the bill to identify keys to success and any barriers to successful implementation of Academies and submit a report to the legislative education committees by January 1, 2013.

Changes are made to laws pertaining to nonhigh payments, enrollment of students in other districts, and the establishment of new secondary programs in nonhigh districts to permit Academies as authorized under the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 16, 2010.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except section 6 which makes a technical amendment to a prior law that is reinstated after a scheduled expiration and takes effect September 1, 2011, and section 11 which amends the prior law dealing with levy bases that is reinstated after a scheduled expiration date and takes effect January 1, 2012.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Nonhigh districts would really like to be able to offer a high school program, but the standing rule is to have 400 students in the high school before you can start one. It gives nonhigh districts the ability to try something a little bit new and different using online learning and experience- and performance-based learning. We can use the method of a lighthouse once districts see what can be done in high school programs, which might not be seat-based but will get students credits and be in depth.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Representative Haigh, prime sponsor.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This is an important bill. Please pass it out of committee.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Representative Haigh, prime sponsor.