
Education Committee

SSB 6041

Brief Description: Regarding lighthouse school programs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Litzow, Rolfes and Hobbs).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands designation of exemplary science, technology, engineering, and mathematics schools to include elementary schools.
- Creates a non-appropriated account that may receive state and other funds to provide grants for designated schools.

Hearing Date: 2/17/12

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Legislation enacted in 2010 requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), if there are funds available, to designate up to three middle schools and up to three high schools to serve as examples of best practices in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. These STEM Lighthouse schools provide technical assistance and advice to other schools in the state who are seeking to create STEM educational programs with small learning communities, interdisciplinary and project-based curriculum, and active partnerships with local businesses and communities.

In 2011 Mead School District, Aviation High School (Highline), and Komachin Middle School (North Thurston) were designated as STEM Lighthouse programs. In 2012 the following schools and district received designation:

- Eastmont Junior High School (Eastmont).
- Secondary Academy for Success (Northshore).
- Science and Math Institute (Tacoma).

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- Stewart Middle School (Tacoma).
- Toppenish High School (Toppenish).
- Odessa School District.

The 2011-13 operating budget contains an appropriation of \$135,000 for each fiscal year to provide grants to the STEM Lighthouse schools.

Summary of Bill:

If there are funds available, the SPI is directed to designate elementary, middle, and high schools as STEM Lighthouse schools. No number of such schools is specified. A STEM Education Lighthouse Account (Account) is created, with expenditures authorized by the SPI. The purpose of the Account is to support schools receiving STEM Lighthouse designation. Revenues to the Account may include any appropriated state funds, federal funds, or private gifts. The Account is subject to allotment procedures, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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