

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1698

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, April 3, 1997

Title: An act relating to the K-20 telecommunications network.

Brief Description: Creating the K-20 telecommunications network governance committee.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Huff, Radcliff, Carlson, Talcott, Clements, Tokuda, McMorris, Hickel, Sehlin, Lisk, Skinner, Sheahan, Alexander, Benson, Gombosky, Wensman, Kessler, Lambert, D. Schmidt, Hatfield, Honeyford, O'Brien, Keiser and Cooke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 3/31/97, 4/3/97 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Wood, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Bauer, Hale, Kohl, Patterson, Prince and Sheldon.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: In 1996, the Washington State Legislature created the K-20 Network to link schools, community colleges, technical colleges, universities, and others for the purpose of enhancing student access to quality educational courses through distance education.

The 1996 legislation directed the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to jointly recommend a network governance structure for the network. On September 30, 1996, the Telecommunications Oversight and Policy Committee (TOPC) approved, by a 6-2 vote, a jointly recommended governance plan that leaves intact the statutory authority of the HECB and OSPI over educational programs. The TOPC-approved document also recommended that the Department of Information Services (DIS) handle the technical management and operations of the K-20 Network, and that the Information Services Board (ISB) retain oversight responsibilities for the K-20 Network just as it has for the other information technologies under current statute.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Cross-sector Network Advisory Committee (CNAC) begins work on July 1, 1997.

A governance structure reflecting the TOPC recommendation is proposed. Governance is defined as responsibility for network programming, site selection, coordinated budget recommendations, and technology oversight.— The HECB, in consultation with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), OSPI, and the ISB must implement

one or more joint operating agreements for the governance of the network. Agreements are to ensure that academic policy drives the technical development of the network.

The existing statutory responsibilities of the HECB, SBCTC, and OSPI are maintained: program planning and approval, budget recommendations to the Legislature, and dispute resolution. The ISB is responsible for oversight and approval of major technology projects and purchases.

The CNAC advises the governance partners on technical and policy planning matters that require cross-sector coordination. The CNAC includes both technical and academic planning personnel and is composed of two subcommittees. **The technical subcommittee** is comprised of equal numbers of K-12 and postsecondary representatives; four public members with technical expertise, appointed by the chair of ISB; and at least one representative of DIS, appointed by the DIS director. At least one member is a representative of the independent higher education institutions. **The policy subcommittee** is comprised of two provosts from the public baccalaureate institutions appointed by the HECB in consultation with the public institutions of higher education; two members appointed by the SBCTC; four representatives of K-12 appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the Washington State Librarian or designee; two representatives of independent higher education institutions appointed by the Governor; and four public members, one of whom is appointed by the leadership of each legislative caucus. The public members are not legislators. All members of both subcommittees serve at the pleasure of the appointing authorities.

Staff and office support for the CNAC are provided through the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Information Services. The CNAC statutes are repealed, effective June 30, 2002.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The Washington Education Governance Committee is not created in the striking amendment. Governance of the K-20 Network will be by joint operating agreements among OSPI, HECB and ISB.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 10, 1997.

Effective Date: Sections 3 through 5, 8, and 10 of this act take effect February 1, 1998.

Testimony For: OSPI and HECB were asked by the 1996 legislation to develop a governance plan. All of us must work together in order to succeed. The joint operating agreement is the preferred governance structure. CNAC subcommittees know exactly what is happening in the schools and colleges. It is important to work within current bureaucratic structure with clear lines of authority and accountability. The opportunity is great for technology to lead us to the seamless education system we have all worked for. The constitutional authority of the superintendent is a concern when the new bureaucracy is created. The major difference is that the line of accountability is much clearer under the Senate proposal. Too many layers of bureaucracy are counterproductive. K-12 and higher education are already working collaboratively « please do not impede our progress. We would prefer that COP appoint the provosts to the subcommittee.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jean Ameluxen, OSPI; Susan Patrick, HECB; Terry Teale, COP.