

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2952

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 25, 2000

Title: An act relating to a study of distance education.

Brief Description: Requiring a study of distance education.

Sponsors: Representatives Edmonds, Kenney, Gombosky, Esser, Lantz, Pflug, Veloria, Edwards and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/23/2000, 2/25/2000 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Sheahan, B. Sheldon and West.

Staff: William Bridges (786-7424)

Background: The Higher Education Coordinating Board anticipates growing enrollment in Washington's higher education system. One strategy to meet this growth is to expand distance education. If distance education is expanded, new technology will need to be installed and faculty and staff will need to be trained.

Summary of Bill: The Higher Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Office of Financial Management, and the state institutions of higher education, working collaboratively, must conduct a study regarding distance education and report back to the Legislature no later than January 2001. The study must address the following elements related to distance education:

- definitions for the different modes of distance education;
- the impacts on capital needs and facility utilization;
- the impacts on instruction and faculty, as well as student, technological, and administrative support services;
- the obstacles in providing instruction via distance delivery;
- the cost factors associated with different distance delivery modes;
- the role of the K-20 network;
- strategies to create efficiencies through partnerships and collaborations; and
- the implications on access to higher education.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: There is a frustrating disconnect between fiscal and policy committees that creates a fragmented view of distance education. With distance education constantly changing, the Legislature needs a study to provide guidance for such issues as infrastructure requirements and budget impacts. The K-12 system would also like to be included in the study. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction was seriously considered as a participant, but it was decided that the consideration of K-12 issues in this study would probably delay its release. Faculty enthusiastically endorse this study because it will help answer questions concerning such issues as the impact of distance learning on existing on-site classes.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Rep. Carolyn Edmonds, prime sponsor; Bruce Botka, HECB; Suanne Carlson, SBCTC; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, WFT; Ken Kanikeberg, OSPI; Karin Hilgerson, WEA - HE.