

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1646

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to alternative educational service providers.

Brief Description: Including the Washington National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program as an alternative educational service provider.

Sponsors: Representatives D. Schmidt, Haigh, Talcott, Keiser, Cox, Schual-Berke, Anderson, Pearson, Quall, Santos, Rockefeller, McDermott, Schindler, Conway, Bush, Dunn and Campbell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/5/01, 2/21/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Includes the Washington National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program as an alternative educational service provider and describes the funding formula for students enrolled in the program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Anderson, Republican Vice Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Cox, Ericksen, Keiser, McDermott, Pearson, Rockefeller, Santos, Schindler, D. Schmidt and Schual-Berke.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By law, school districts are permitted to contract with outside organizations to provide classes and other educational services for eligible students. Eligible students include students who are likely to be expelled, present disciplinary problems, or are academically at risk. The outside organizations are called alternative education service providers.

They include other schools, alternative educational service programs not operated by the school district, education centers, skills centers, dropout prevention programs, and other public and private organizations offering educational programs for these students.

For at-risk students, the school district and the service provider must specify the specific learning standards the students are expected to achieve. In addition, the placement of the student in the provider's alternative program must be jointly determined by the school district, the student's parent or legal guardian, and the alternative education service provider. School districts may require students who would otherwise be expelled or suspended to attend a program offered by an alternative education service provider.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) adopts rules for the reporting and documentation of student enrollment in these programs.

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is a national program that seeks to provide educational assistance, structure, and mentoring to young people who have dropped out of school. Entering students must not have been convicted of a felony and must be drug free. The program has a 22-week residential component, and a year-long post-residential mentoring phase. During the residential phase, students live in dormitories and take classes that will enable them to obtain a high school diploma or GED. The residential phase is very structured and includes activities similar to basic military training. The goal of the program is to have the students who leave it return to full-time work or school, including post-secondary education. Sixty percent of the cost of the program is borne by the federal government. Washington does not currently participate in the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, but the state is in line to receive a federal grant if the Washington National Guard is able to sponsor a program in our state.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Washington National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is added to the list of alternative education service providers. Funding will be allocated directly to the program based on statewide average rates for basic education, special education, and categorical and block grant programs. The formula shall be based on funding opening day enrollment and on one full-time equivalent student for each 100 hours of credit generating instruction each month. The office of the OSPI, in consultation with the military department, shall adopt guidelines for the funding formula. The State Board of Education shall adopt rules on the acceptance of high school credits gained through the program.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

References to a direct contract with the OSPI are removed and the funding formula is revised. The program description and references to teachers are removed. The State

Board of Education shall adopt rules on the acceptance of credits gained through the program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 30, 2001.

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

Testimony For: The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program is operating in several different states. It has had an astounding success rate in helping young school dropouts turn their lives around. Eighty-six percent of the participants who finish the program have entered college, finished high school, or become employed in full-time jobs. Washington is in line for a federal grant to fund 60 percent of program costs. The other 40 percent would be provided through this legislation. The National Guard is already working on possible housing and classroom sites for the program and is ready to begin once all the pieces are in place.

(Concerns with original bill) The mechanics of the funding formula need to be refined.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative D. Schmidt, prime sponsor; Lt. Colonel Rick Patterson, Military Department; Larry Davis, State Board of Education; and Bob Butts, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.