

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5717

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to K-12 skill centers.

Brief Description: Requiring a study on the availability and use of skill centers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rockefeller, Benton, Fairley, Oke, Keiser, Zarelli, Shin, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/20/06, 2/22/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Directs the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to study and recommend to the 2007 Legislature how to increase opportunities for students not adequately served by a skill center.
- Requires the study to examine gaps in service areas; service for students in rural and high density areas; integration of core academic content into skill center programs; and the role skill centers play in dropout prevention and retrieval.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Santos, Shabro, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

About 7,000 high school students from 85 school districts currently attend one of the 10 skill centers across the state that provide in-depth instruction in career and technical skills. Students typically attend the skill center for part of the day and their home high school for the remainder of the day. Skill centers also offer summer school programs. Skill centers operate under cooperative agreements with participating school districts and are governed by an

administrative council comprised of the superintendents of the participating districts. The centers generate full-time equivalent (FTE) funding for enrolled students and receive enhanced funding for those courses approved as career and technical education courses by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Skill centers are located in Vancouver, Tumwater, Wenatchee, Port Angeles, SeaTac, Everett, Spokane, Kennewick, Bremerton, and Yakima. The 2005-07 Capital Budget included funding for a feasibility study for an additional skill center in Skagit County.

Summary of Bill:

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), in collaboration with the OSPI, is directed to study and recommend to the 2007 Legislature how to increase opportunities for students living in areas of the state that are not adequately served by a skill center. If plausible, the Workforce Board must provide preliminary recommendations to the Washington Learns study by June 2006.

The study must focus on the following issues:

1. current skill center geographic coverage and gaps in service areas;
2. how to increase program access to students in rural and remote areas and address the difficulties in providing adequate services in high density areas;
3. how to integrate core academic content into skill center programs and how to determine skill center course equivalencies for the purpose of meeting high school graduation requirements; and
4. the role that skill centers can play in dropout prevention and retrieval programs.

In making recommendations, the Workforce Board must explore the feasibility of satellite sites, joint programs between high schools and community colleges, use of the K-20 network, and additional evening and summer programs. The study must also provide an analysis of any additional funding needs or different funding methods necessary to implement the recommendations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This is a strategic planning bill for skill centers. There are many positive proposals coming forward regarding career and technical education, including proposals to examine the feasibility of additional centers. This bill ensures strategic placement and development of skill centers. It allows examination of access issues, especially for students in

rural and remote areas. There may be other ways to deliver career and technical education services for those students. Funding is needed to complete the study.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) John Aultman, New Market Skills Center; Rod Duckworth, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Mitch Denning, Alliance of Education Associations; and Kathleen Lopp, Washington Association for Career and Technical Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.