

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5717

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 28, 2005

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

Brief Description: Providing a funding formula for skill centers.

Sponsors: Senators Rockefeller, Benton, Fairley, Oke, Keiser, Zarelli, Shin, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/17/05, 2/28/05 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5717 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Carrell, Delvin, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Mulliken, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Shin.

Staff: Brian Jeffries (786-7422)

Background: There are 10 skill centers operating in the state. Skill centers are K-12 institutions operating under cooperative agreements among participating school districts that primarily provide students with instruction in career and technical education. Skill centers are governed by an administrative council comprised of the superintendents of the participating cooperative school districts, with each cooperating district having an equal vote. Skill centers generate full-time equivalent (FTE) funding and receive any enhanced funding for those courses approved as career and technical education courses by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Students may attend simultaneously a high school and a skill center. However, under current apportionment rules adopted by OSPI, a student may not generate more than 1.0 FTE, regardless of the aggregate enrolled hours of instruction between the two institutions. The only state program that may allow for a student to generate more than 1.0 FTE is the Running Start program, which allows for a student's FTE for enrollment in any high school courses and enrollment in any college or university courses to be determined separately.

Summary of Substitute Bill: To the extent funds are appropriated, the Superintendent of Public Instruction must provide incentive funds to school districts that maintain or increase the number of students attending skill centers. The OSPI may adopt rules to implement the incentive funds.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The funding formula allowing a student enrolled simultaneously at the high school and a skill center to generate up to 1.2 FTE is eliminated. The Superintendent of Public Instruction must provide incentive funds to school districts that maintain or increase the number of students attending skill centers. The OSPI may adopt rules to implement the incentive funds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 2005.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Skills centers provide students with the skills necessary to compete in our increasingly technical skills driven economy. Many students who have not found success in the regular high school have found success in a skills center. Without the skills centers, many students would drop out of high school because what the regular high school offers is not relevant to them. Skills centers are expensive to manage and are underfunded. Because of the funding disparity this bill addresses, high schools have a disincentive to promote the skills centers. High school counselors have counseled students away from attending skills centers because of the loss of funds. Additional funds provided to the high schools if this bill passes would allow those high schools to offer remedial instruction and other services to students that they now cannot due to the lack of funding when students leave for the skills centers.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Phil Rockefeller, prime sponsor; Steve Burch, Sno-Isle Skills Center; Garth Langley, Sno-Isle Skills Center; Joseph Alonso, Sno-Isle Skills Center; Bob Eckert, Kennewick School District; Carolyn Stella, Yakima Valley Technical Skills Center; Dan Steele, WSSDA; Rainer Houser, AWSP; Kathleen Lopp, WA-ACTE; Mitch Denning, Alliance of Education Associations; Ron Roberts, NW Regional Council of Carpenters' Training Center; Greg Williamson, OSPI; Wes Pruitt.