

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5974

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, December 13, 2011

Title: An act relating to demonstrating college level skills.

Brief Description: Including project lead-the-way examinations on the master list of postsecondary courses fulfilled by proficiency examinations.

Sponsors: Senators Tom, Litzow, Kilmer, Fain, Hewitt, Chase and Kohl-Welles; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 12/12/11, 12/13/11 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Murray, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Baumgartner, Brown, Conway, Fraser, Harper, Hatfield, Hewitt, Holmquist Newbry, Honeyford, Kastama, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Padden, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Maria Hovde (786-7710)

Background: Postsecondary Course Credit in High School. There are a variety of education programs that allow high school students to earn postsecondary course credit while also earning credit toward high school graduation, including:

- Running Start, which allows students to take courses on college campuses that count toward both high school and college graduation;
- College in the High School, which permits students to complete college level work while staying on their high school campuses;
- Tech Prep, which allows students to take professional technical courses on their high school campuses;
- Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs, which allow students to take college level courses while staying on their high school campuses with the requirement that students must pass a standardized examination in order to obtain college credit; and

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- Running Start for the Trades, which prepares students to enter apprenticeships immediately after high school graduation.

The institutions of higher education are required to collaboratively develop a master list of postsecondary courses that can be fulfilled by taking the advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or other recognized college-level proficiency exams and meeting the qualifying examination score or demonstrated competencies for lower division general education requirements or postsecondary professional technical requirements.

Project Lead the Way. Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is a national organization that provides science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curricular programs for middle and high schools in the United States, as well as a professional development component for teachers. The curricula are developed to enhance student learning by providing a hands-on, problem-solving approach.

In Washington State, there are currently 7150 students served with PLTW engineering programs at 44 middle schools and 63 high schools and PLTW biomedical science programs at 18 high schools. Training for teachers is provided by Seattle University and Washington State University-Spokane.

Summary of Bill: Includes PLTW examinations in the list of college level proficiency exams that are recognized as a method for fulfilling postsecondary courses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill helps students who demonstrated proficiency with PLTW courses to gain college credit. The current master list was to be posted by December 1, 2011; so, adding these courses will not be necessary until June of 2013, which allows the schools some time to implement these new requirements. Many students today cannot get credit for these courses unless a school will accept the results of the test that is taken and paid for by the student, or they attend a private school or an out-of-state school. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs are long-standing exams that have been used to fulfill postsecondary credits. PLTW has not been reviewed in this state so there is uncertainty of the costs affiliated with the necessary review of these courses. Washington State University-Spokane has trained 40 teachers over the last year for their participation in PLTW curriculum and there are plans to provide training to 80 teachers next year. There has been great student success with engagement in these courses and there needs to be collaboration to ensure that there is proper alignment of PLTW classes with postsecondary courses.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Leslie Goldstein, Office of the Governor; Karl Ruff, Seattle Public Schools; Michelle Andreas, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.