

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5640

As of February 8, 1995

Title: An act relating to international education.

Brief Description: Requiring competency in a foreign language in order to receive a baccalaureate degree from a public institution of higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Prince, Fairley, Wood, Fraser, Hale, Kohl, Johnson, Franklin, Prentice and Sheldon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/13/95.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: The 1993 Legislature established the Washington Task Force on International Education and Cultural Exchanges. The preliminary report, delivered to the Legislature in December 1993, provided a snapshot of the international education activities in which the state is currently involved. The October 1994 final report recognized that Washington State's economic future is world trade, and that citizens must be provided with the tools they need to work in the international arena. The task force made six broad recommendations to the Legislature. Recommendation 3 asserts that the importance of competency in two world languages becomes critical as Washington State citizens compete for jobs and business opportunities in the world trade market. Washington State students in both K-12 and higher education must learn a second world language as part of their educational process.

Summary of Bill: After May 1, 1999, before receiving a baccalaureate degree from a public institution of higher education, a student shall demonstrate competency in at least one world language in addition to English.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board, in cooperation with the institutions of higher education and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, shall initiate a system for tracking the progress of world language instruction in public colleges and universities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 1995.

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