
Education Committee

HB 2704

Brief Description: Providing standards for alternative learning experience programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Talcott, Haigh, Tom, Kenney, Anderson, Nixon, Carrell, Boldt, Kirby, Benson, Hunter, Jarrett, Priest, Skinner, Upthegrove, Shabro, Miloscia, Quall, Buck, Ruderman, Moeller, Rockefeller and Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Describes the type of student plans, staff contact and assessments that must be included in alternative learning experience programs funded with state monies.
- Permits the enrollment of part-time students, direct parental involvement, and individualized instruction in the programs.

Hearing Date: 1/26/04

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

Under current law, school districts may provide directly or through contract for alternative learning programs. The programs generally serve students with learning needs that can best be met outside a traditional classroom setting. Under the rules currently in place for these program, participants must be enrolled in the programs full-time and must spend at least part of their time on the school site.

Beginning in 2000, the Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended a new set of program rules. The rules would permit part-time enrollments and would allow contact to include indirect contact through the use of instant messaging, telephone calls, and other telecommunication linkages. Since the rule change can affect school enrollments, the agency has submitted it to the legislative fiscal committees for their review and approval as is required by current law. The law requires the superintendent to submit recommended basic education formula changes to the legislature for its approval, amendment or rejection.

Summary of Bill:

School districts may contract for or directly provide alternative learning experience programs for eligible full-time and part-time students. The programs must fulfill the following requirements:

- Address the needs of students for learning in a nontraditional environment.

- Be supervised by certificated staff.
- Provide each student with direct personal contact. The contact may be provided in various ways, including interaction through a telephone, interactive computer or interactive video.
- Through contact, provide each student with instruction, testing, assignment review, and evaluation.
- Annually assess each full-time student, using all required state and district assessments.
- Exempt part-time home-schooled students and private-school students from the requirement to take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning.

The programs may:

- Include significant parental participation in the design and implementation of a student's learning plan.
- Include individualized courses of study.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/26/04.

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