
Education Committee

HB 1550

Brief Description: Supporting the state achievers' scholarship program.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, McCoy, P. Sullivan, McDermott, Roberts, Kagi, Hasegawa, Tom, Sells, Kenney, Kilmer and Talcott.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Appropriates two million dollars from the state general fund to support community volunteer mentors of high school students selected as achiever scholars.

Hearing Date: 2/9/05

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

The Washington Education Foundation (WEF) was created in 2000 to provide scholarships and mentors to low-income students who exhibit high potential for academic success. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has committed \$100 million dollars to create the Washington State Achievers Scholarship program to provide college scholarships to motivated students from 16 high-poverty schools with diverse ethnic populations. Other private donors also sponsor scholarship programs through the WEF. In addition to providing scholarships, the Achievers Scholarship program matches students with a mentor to assist in the college preparation and application processes. Under the Hometown Mentor program, community involvement officers recruit, train, and match community volunteer mentors with students in their junior year of high school. Hometown Mentorship continues until the student enters college, at which time a college mentor is provided.

The WEF reports that at the 16 participating high schools, approximately 2,114 mentors have been matched with students since the program began, and that community involvement officers may work with up to 240 volunteer mentors at one time. In the 2003-05 biennium \$1 million dollars from the state general fund was provided to support the Hometown Mentor program.

Summary of Bill:

In each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 2006, and June 30, 2007, \$1 million dollars is appropriated from the state general fund to the Superintendent of Public Instruction to support community volunteers in the Hometown Mentor program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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