

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3082

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to culminating projects in the area of environmental education.

Brief Description: Creating the sustainable environment culminating project grant program.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Priest, Quall, Seaquist, Dunshee, Sullivan and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/4/08, 2/5/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes a competitive grant program to support environmentally related culminating projects.
- Subject to funding, directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to work with grant recipients to implement a statewide online database related to culminating projects.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, Liias, Roach, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

Completion of a culminating project is one of the requirements for graduation from high school. Through a culminating project, students demonstrate their learning competencies and preparations related to the following learning goals:

- thinking analytically, logically, and creatively;

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- integrating experience and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and
- understanding the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

School districts define, in written policies, the process to implement and assess this graduation requirement.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A grant program is created to establish a regional approach to providing environmentally related culminating project opportunities for students. Educational Service Districts (ESDs) will disburse funds, on a competitive basis, to nonprofit organizations or tribal education departments. The ESDs may pool grant funds and award a single grant to a single nonprofit organization. The ESDs may also accept funds from public and private sources which may be pooled and disbursed through the competitive grants process.

Grant recipients must provide assistance to school districts such as instructional resources and support, professional development and equipment sharing, and the provision of sample curricula and project ideas. The culminating projects which are developed shall allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and leadership skills in a real-world, hands-on context. Students shall be provided the opportunity to interact with scientists, as well as policymakers and local leaders, and to use scientific protocols to share data and compare findings. A community mentoring component is required.

Grant recipients must report to the ESDs and the Legislature by December 2009. These reports shall include the number of students served, the types and number of culminating projects completed, and feedback from students and teachers.

Subject to funding, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) shall work with the nonprofit grant recipients to implement a statewide online project database in which students can connect to project opportunities and where students may post their own projects. This database shall be housed and managed by the OSPI.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Two additions are made to the original bill:

- The ESDs may award grants to tribal education departments, in addition to nonprofit organizations, to support environmentally related culminating projects.
- The ESDs may accept funds from other private and public sources and these funds may be pooled and disbursed through the competitive grant process.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This program provides students an opportunity to involve themselves in real environmental education and work. In a true public-private partnership, businesses and private individuals work with students. These culminating projects are not classroom projects, and they do not require school counselors. Rather, these are real world projects through which students have an opportunity to show what they are capable of doing.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; Lynne Ferguson and Brian Barker, Pacific Education Institute; Megan Haughton, Parker Townley and Ayana Cleveland, Capitol High School; Gilda Wheeler, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Suzi Wright, Tulalip Tribes; Bill Keim, Association of Educational Service Districts; Abby Rusley, Environmental Education Association of Washington; Steve Robinson, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; Margaret Tudor, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.