

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5637

As of February 16, 2015

Title: An act relating to creating a peer mentoring program.

Brief Description: Creating a peer mentoring program.

Sponsors: Senators Hasegawa, Roach, Kohl-Welles, Chase, Keiser and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/12/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: Compass 2 Campus (C2C). Pursuant to 2009 legislation, Western Washington University (WWU) created an early outreach, peer mentoring pilot program named C2C. The program, designed to inspire academic success and introduce elementary students to educational opportunities, pairs at-risk Whatcom and Skagit County fifth-grade students with WWU student mentors. In the 2014-15 academic year, WWU student mentors worked with approximately 9000 students in fifth through tenth grades, in 11 school districts and 31 schools.

Washington State Work Study (SWS) Program. SWS helps low and middle-income students earn money for college while gaining work experience, often in jobs related to their academic and career goals. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) administers SWS. In 2013-14 about 4400 students received funding under SWS.

Summary of Bill: By September 1, 2016, all six four-year institutions of higher education must create and implement a peer mentoring program modeled after WWU's C2C program. Working with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, each of the six institutions must identify one or more community and technical colleges with which to partner in the program.

In instituting a peer mentoring program, the six institutions must:

- recruit college student mentors and develop a curriculum to train mentors;
- identify one or more local elementary schools with demonstrated need for such a program;

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- develop necessary contracts or interagency agreements;
- solicit grants, awards, and gifts;
- provide community outreach and publicity;
- develop appropriate evaluative criteria and conduct periodic evaluations; and
- report every other year to the Legislature starting December 1, 2017.

WSAC is allowed to award work-study opportunity grants to the institutions to cover wages for the students employed by the peer mentoring program. The definition of needy student for the work study program is amended to include students in a peer mentoring program created under this act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: Fifth grade is a tipping point. Mentoring is so important to provide guidance for students. The premise is to recruit college students and then put them back in the communities where they came from to work with K–12 students. WWU has implemented this program with voluntary resources. However, providing funding for mentors is a perfect use of work study money. WWU is already working with Central Washington University. WWU students are trained as student mentors and receive credit. All fifth graders in the program visit the WWU campus. WWU mentors visit their K–12 students throughout the school year for a minimum of four hours a week. As students progress, college students continue to offer support. Each year a new cohort of fifth graders are added. Ten students receive work study for C2C. However, we recommend removing Section 5. We assume institutions will use existing SWS allocation and peer mentors will need to meet definition of need and residency.

OTHER: This is a phenomenal program. Early outreach is valuable to get students progressing along the path. Using administrative costs to pay for the program will take money from students. The creation of a one-size-fits-all model does not fit all student needs and there are no new resources to create the program. The bill doesn't recognize current initiatives. Change the bill language from shall to may, or implement only with additional resources.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hasegawa, prime sponsor; Sarah Bishop, K–12 Engagement Coordinator, University of WA Pipeline Project; Rachelle Sharpe, WSAC; Becca Kenna-Schenk, WWU.

OTHER: Scott Copeland, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Julie Garver, The Evergreen State College.