

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5668

As of February 20, 2023

Title: An act relating to small districts with less than 2,750 students and significant participation in skill centers.

Brief Description: Concerning small districts with less than 2,750 students and significant participation in skill centers.

Sponsors: Senators Shewmake, Torres and Dozier.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/13/23, 2/15/23 [DPS-WM, DNP, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 2/20/23.

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop procedures that provide 0.8 FTE of funding to certain small school districts that send students to skill centers.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5668 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Dozier, Mullet and Pedersen.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Hunt.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Hawkins, Ranking Member.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Kayla Hammer (786-7305)

Background: Skill centers are regional secondary schools serving high school students from multiple school districts. They provide instruction in preparatory career and technical education programs that are either too expensive or too specialized for school districts to operate individually. Each skill center is operated by a host school district and governed by an administrative council in accordance with a cooperative agreement.

Students that attend skill centers must be funded for all classes at the skill center and at the sending school district, up to 1.6 full time equivalents (FTE). The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must develop procedures to ensure that no student is reported for more than 1.6 FTE combining both school district and skill center enrollment, and procedures to determine the appropriate share of FTE enrollment count between the school district and skill center.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): OSPI is directed to develop procedures to fund students for 0.8 FTE at the sending school district, regardless of a student's actual enrolled weekly minutes at the sending school district, if the following criteria are met:

- the total headcount enrollment of the sending school district is fewer than 2750 students;
- at least 10 percent of the sending school district's combined 11th and 12th grade student headcount is enrolled at the skill center;
- the student is enrolled for at least 0.5 FTE at the sending school district prior to applying the funding enhancement;
- the student is enrolled for at least 0.5 FTE at the skill center; and
- the sending school district is a member of the administrative council governing the skill center.

This new directive does not permit a student to be reported for more than 1.6 FTE when combining high school and skill center enrollment.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Specifies that OSPI must develop procedures to fund students for 0.8 FTE at certain sending districts regardless of a student's actual enrolled weekly minutes at the sending district.
- Provides that a student may not be reported for more than 1.6 FTE when combining high school and skill center enrollment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Due to the limited resources and remote locations of many small districts, small district students don't have access to the same variety of graduation pathways as students in larger districts. These small districts are punished when they send students to skill centers because they lose the student FTE and it puts a burden on the district overall. Small districts have no economy of scale to offset these costs or independently offer rich and diverse opportunities. This bill eliminates competing interests. By removing the financial barrier, it will open the doorway for students to access essential programs. These skill center programs, such as nursing, construction, firefighting, and child care, will help solve workplace issues in these same rural communities.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Sharon Shewmake, Prime Sponsor; Lynette Brower, Washington State Skills Centers Association; Paul Randall, WA State Skills Center Association; Jim Kowalkowski, Rural Education Center; Frank Redmon, Quilcene School District; Pete Peterson, Kiona-Benton City School District; Wayne Barrett, Concrete School District; James Everett, Meridian School District; Michael Green, Woodland School District; Derek Sarley, School Director, Walla Walla Public Schools.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: The pillars of skill centers are economic and workforce development, but there is a need for increased access to skill center programming. This bill will reduce the cost on small districts to provide access to CTE programs to students and will allow students to pursue their career goals. There is not additional funding specifically for skill centers in the bill.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Lynette Brower, WA State Skills Center Association; James Everett, Meridian School District; Paul Randall, Tri-Tech Skill Center; Derek Sarley, Walla Walla Public Schools; Jim Kowalkowski, Rural Education Center.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.