

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2422

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Higher Education*

Title: An act relating to accountability and collaboration in higher education and K-12 education.

Brief Description: Charging school districts for remedial higher education classes.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Jacobsen, Wood, Wineberry, Dorn, R. Fisher, Peery and Orr.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 6, 1992, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 12 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Ogden, Vice Chair; Wood, Ranking Minority Member; May, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Dellwo; Fraser; Ludwig; Miller; Sheldon; Spanel; and Van Luven.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: According to a national survey of colleges and universities released by The National Center for Educational Statistics, 30 percent of college freshmen took at least one remedial or precollege course in the fall of 1989.

During the fall of 1990, 13,284 students who had graduated from high school within the previous three years were enrolled in Washington's community colleges. Of those students, 44 percent were enrolled in precollege classes. Most students were enrolled in a single course, generally in reading, writing, or mathematics.

During the fall of 1991, at Washington State University, 573 students were enrolled in state supported precollege algebra, and 51 students were enrolled in Basic Skills in English. The English course was essentially an English as a second language class.

During the fall of 1991, 391 students at Central were enrolled in state supported precollege classes in English, writing, spelling, reading and mathematics. In the fall of 1991, 48 students at Western were enrolled in a state supported precollege math class, and at Eastern, 219 students were enrolled in precollege English and mathematics classes.

State supported precollege classes at the University of Washington (UW) are restricted to participants in the Educational Opportunity Program for disadvantaged students. During the 1990-91 academic year, 589 students were enrolled in precollege mathematics and English classes. Other UW students may take precollege classes offered at the university by Seattle Central Community College. The Evergreen State College does not offer state supported precollege classes. However, in unusual circumstances, individual students may arrange for such instruction. In the last three years, about six students have made arrangements for credit-bearing precollege instruction.

The above statistics, which are based on student headcount, may count some students more than once. The double counting will occur if a student was enrolled in more than one precollege class.

Summary of Substitute Bill: By May 1st of each year, each public college and university will report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction with information about college students enrolled in state supported precollege classes. The report will include the numbers of college freshmen and sophomores who graduated from a Washington high school within three years of enrolling in certain state supported precollege classes. The report will also include the types of classes taken by the students, and the high schools from which they graduated. Each institution will also report to the Washington school districts from which these students graduated.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: School districts will not have a charge assessed for each recent graduate enrolled in a college remedial class. As a result, colleges and universities will not report cost figures for remedial classes to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and no tutor account is established.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 27, 1992 (original bill). Requested February 7, 1992 (substitute bill).

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

Testimony For: (Original bill): A high school diploma should indicate something about the basic academic skills of the holder of the diploma. Employers and college officials are concerned about the low skill levels of some recent high school graduates. Perhaps holding schools accountable for college students who do not have basic reading, writing, and computational skills will motivate school districts to consider ways to ensure that high school graduates have those basic skills.

Testimony Against: (Original bill): School districts should not be held accountable for problems that they cannot control. School districts do not determine high school graduation requirements; those requirements are determined by the legislature and the state Board of Education. School districts cannot control the home environment of students. If one group is held accountable, then all groups must be held equally accountable simultaneously. Legislation of this nature has the potential to exacerbate tensions between educational sectors. Positive methods must be found to assist districts in their efforts to improve educational quality. Institutions of higher education are ready to work with the common schools to improve the skills of entering college students.

Witnesses: (Pro original bill): Representative Silver; and Representative Jacobsen. (Con original bill): Pat Green, state Board for Community and Technical Colleges; John Kvamme, Tacoma Public Schools, and WASA; and Lorraine Wilson, Washington State School Directors Association. (Information only): Alan Waugh, ABLE Network; and Judy McNickle, Higher Education Coordinating Board.