

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5766

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to a program for academic excellence for at-risk youth.

Brief Description: Creating an academic excellence program for at-risk youth.

Sponsor(s): Senators Pelz, Bailey, Rinehart, Erwin, Murray, Anderson, A. Smith, Newhouse, Stratton and Bauer.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, April 3, 1991, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 17 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff; Broback; Cole; Dorn; Holland; P. Johnson; Jones; Neher; Orr; Phillips; Rasmussen; Roland; and Valle.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: Research findings indicate that among at-risk youth a disproportionate number of minority youth are affected by substance abuse, gang activity, unemployment and teen pregnancy. Current programs may not be adequately addressing the needs of at-risk minority youth. A model program targeted at minority at-risk youth is one way to explore strategies to respond to the needs of these youth.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Program Purpose

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall serve as the lead agency, working with the Employment Security Department, and the Department of Social and Health Services, the State Board for Vocational Education, in developing and administering Project DREAM (Dare to Reach for Educational Aspirations and Marks), a pilot program for academic excellence for under-achieving, at-risk students.

The program is not limited to -- but must focus on -- serving minority students.

Student Eligibility

Students eligible to participate are those age 14 through 21 who: are one or more grade levels behind in basic skills or have not graduated from high school or successfully completed the general educational development test; have violated building or district rules of conduct at least three times in the same school year, are pregnant, or are parents; are from a historically disadvantaged group; and have a family income level below the median level for the state.

Eligible Districts/Project Duration

Project DREAM is initially limited to the school districts of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, Yakima and Pasco. The program begins the school year following receipt of federal funds by the superintendent of public instruction for the program, and ends at the completion of the fourth school year following implementation of the program.

Program Activities

Participating districts shall design the specific local program under Project DREAM. Districts must consider certain activities in designing the local program, including working with the job service centers and the Department of Social and Health Services. Reporting requirements are specified.

The participating districts under Project DREAM must provide: academic counseling and outreach; parent and family outreach; employment/vocational counseling and training; substance abuse awareness and counseling and treatment as necessary; teen pregnancy/parenting counseling; and positive self-image building.

The participating districts are responsible for screening, training, and employing adult supervisors for the participating students. The advisors shall not be required to be certificated, and shall be responsible for working with no more than 15 at-risk students, meeting weekly with each student and bi-weekly with each student's teachers, school counselor, parents/guardians, and family members; and facilitating each student's contact with health care providers, vocational counselors, job service centers, and job interviews.

Participant Responsibilities

Participating students are responsible for complying with all regulations governing participation, meeting weekly with their adult advisor, and maintaining a personal written or

audio portfolio, attending all programs, seminars, and training sessions arranged by their advisor, and maintaining regular attendance at school, work, or both.

Duties of SPI

The superintendent of public instruction is directed to organize a speakers' bureau, including prominent minority role models, meet with community and business leaders to market Project DREAM, and coordinate with other state and local agencies a centralized data base of pre-existing services that can meet the purposes of Project DREAM.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amendments clarify that the adult advisors shall not be required to be certificated, and expand the criteria for student participation to include students who are pregnant, or who are parents.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 25, 1991.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect when SPI receives funds for the purpose of this act and only if such funds are received by June 30, 1993.

Testimony For: This legislation would create a comprehensive mentor program for our urban youth. The needs of these children are real, and must be addressed. The program will go into effect only if federal funds become available.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Pelz; Former Senator George Fleming; and Walter Ball, Association of Washington School Principals.