

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5780

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to enhancement of employment transition programs for developmentally disabled high school students.

Brief Description: Enhancing employment transition programs for developmentally disabled high school students.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators L. Smith, Wojahn, Niemi, Johnson, West, Thorsness, von Reichbauer, L. Kreidler and Craswell).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, April 5, 1991, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 8 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Beck; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: Approximately 1800 developmentally disabled citizens are currently in need of some type of employment service. In addition, the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council estimates that 250 to 300 developmentally disabled individuals graduate from high school each year, needing employment services to obtain and keep a job. Some of these individuals may not request needed services. If employment services are requested, these persons are usually placed on a waiting list.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction offer specialized programs, facilitating the transition from school to work for special education students in some school districts. Several school districts have developed innovative programs which place these young adults in community employment settings.

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council staff reports that high school graduates who do not utilize the skills gained in the classroom tend to lose those skills over time. According to the October 1988 Washington State Interagency Transition Report, the failure to actively utilize these skills results in the loss of a \$101,000 public investment in special education per student.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Legislature intends to expand services to developmentally disabled secondary school graduates within available resources.

The secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must establish a regional disabilities employment function to promote and enhance effective transition from educational or treatment programs to employment for persons with developmental disabilities. Other duties of the function must include the enhanced use of alternative resources and the promotion of competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

Regional disabilities employment contractors must develop a package of incentives which enhance the disabled student's transition from school to work. These packages are offered by application to interested local school districts. In addition, contractors must collaborate with a variety of local entities to develop and encourage community partnerships which create employment opportunities for functionally disabled persons in transition from school or treatment programs to work.

The secretary of DSHS must appoint regional disabilities employment advisory councils. These councils must use a competitive process to develop a list of potential regional disabilities employment contractors. The characteristics of potential contractors are enumerated. The secretary must select regional disabilities employment function contractors from lists developed by the regional advisory councils.

In addition, advisory councils must plan for the community options and services available through regional disabilities employment contractors. The advisory council must have no more than 20 members and provides representatives from the disabled community or their parents, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, and other public and private organizations.

A developmentally disabled student's individual education plan must include transition services by the age of 16. The transition plan must be developed in conjunction with a regional coordinator of transition services, if one exists. If educationally appropriate, community based transitional

services and the choices of parents, guardians and the student must be provided by the school district.

If these services are available and educationally appropriate, a special education cooperative, school district or group of districts must contract for transition services through a regional transition services coordinator.

Recent federal definitions of transition services are adopted. The superintendent of public instruction must adopt rules to implement the transition services for developmentally disabled students outlined in the act.

A null and void clause is included making the act contingent upon funding in the budget.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:
The reference to functionally disabled, mentally ill, and traumatic brain injured persons is deleted.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: Developmentally disabled students need transition services as they prepare to leave the education system and enter the community.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Smith, prime sponsor.