

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5139

---

### As Passed House - Amended:

March 4, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to remedial postsecondary education.

**Brief Description:** Concerning student preparation for college-level work.

**Sponsors:** By Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senator Carlson).

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/18/04, 2/27/04 [DPA];

Appropriations: 2/28/04, 3/1/04 [DPA(HE)].

#### Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/4/04, 94-1.

### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Directs the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a work group regarding standards and expectations for college-level work.
- Requires a report by December 15, 2004 that includes strategies, timelines, and benchmarks for reducing remediation over the next three years.

---

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Boldt, Chase, Condotta, Jarrett, McCoy, Morrell and Ormsby.

**Staff:** Barbara McLain (786-7383).

---

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended by Committee on Higher Education. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority

Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Anderson, Boldt, Buck, Conway, Cox, Kenney, McDonald, Sump and Talcott.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Chandler, Clements, Cody, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kessler, Linville, McIntire, Miloscia, Ruderman and Schual-Berke.

**Staff:** Susan Howson (786-7142).

**Background:**

A precollege class refers to academic work taken by postsecondary students that is required for college-level study in English and mathematics. Precollege classes do not carry credit and are not accepted for transfer into baccalaureate or transfer associate degree programs.

Of the high school graduating class of 2002, approximately 29 percent (18,022 students) enrolled immediately in a community or technical college for the 2002-03 academic year. More than half (57 percent) of these students enrolled in one or more precollege classes in their first year of attendance at the college. An additional 19 percent (11,675 students) of graduates enrolled in a community or technical college within one or two years after graduation, where more than one-third (35 percent) take a precollege class.

For 2003, the public four-year institutions reported the following number of students within three years of high school graduation enrolled in precollege classes:

University of Washington: 101  
Washington State University: 35  
Central Washington University: 549  
Eastern Washington University: 1,437  
Western Washington University: 88  
The Evergreen State College: Not Applicable

In part, the lower numbers are due to competitive admission standards, but institutions also have different ways of providing remedial services for students. Some require students to take precollege classes through a community or technical college; one provides supplemental tutoring rather than requiring the student to enroll in a separate class.

For Fiscal Year 2003, the estimated cost from the state general fund and tuition for precollege classes for recent high school graduates was \$16.8 million for the community and technical colleges and \$530,000 for the four-year institutions.

**Summary of Amended Bill:**

Within current budgets, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must convene a work group to address remediation issues. The work group will discuss standards and expectations for the knowledge and skills needed for college-level work; identify causes of current gaps among recent high school graduates; identify innovative

strategies or initiatives to provide graduates with the knowledge and skills they need; and develop and initiate actions to address the gaps.

The agencies must submit a report to the education and higher education committees by December 15, 2004, that summarizes the findings of the work group and describes actions taken to enhance the knowledge and skills of high school graduates. The report must also recommend strategies, timelines, and measurable benchmarks for reducing remediation among recent high school graduates over the next three years.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 27, 2004.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed except for sections 3 through 6, prohibiting reporting of precollege courses as state-supported enrollment and restricting Promise Scholarship and tuition waivers for precollege courses, which take effect September 1, 2009.

**Testimony For:** (Higher Education) (In support of substitute bill) The various education agencies have helped craft a bill to continue their current work and provide an explanation for why we have a remediation problem among recent high school graduates. Students, families, and high school counselors need better information. There is a need to update curriculum, advising strategies, and teaching skills in the high schools, particularly around math. First, however, we need to know the size of the problem and figure out how to fill those gaps. The study will look at whether high schools have sufficient resources to provide more math or English for students. Alignment of high school expectations and college entrance expectations is the current hot topic among colleges and universities and school districts.

**Testimony For:** (Appropriations) (With concerns) About 18,000 community and technical college (CTC) students take remedial classes in a given year and would be subject to the provisions of this bill. This represents about 2,400 full-time equivalent students. At the core of this problem is mathematics. Two-thirds of all remediation in the CTC system is algebra. It is very clear that the state's minimum high school graduation requirements are insufficient to prepare students for college. Only two years of math are required for high school graduation.

The K-12 system and the CTCs are now beginning to more clearly communicate math expectations to students. However, several steps still need to be undertaken. Math expectations must be aligned between the two systems. The K-12 system needs to increase its capacity for math teachers in Washington high schools. Also, students must be held responsible.

The House operating budget includes \$300,000 to bring together representatives of the K-12 system and higher education to develop policies to help students be prepared for math once they reach postsecondary education. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) strongly encourage funding for this budget item in the negotiated conference budget.

The OSPI is concerned about the provision in the bill that directs this work to be done within existing resources. The system is already stretched to meet its existing requirements. Funding for the Transition Math Project will help.

**Testimony Against:** (Higher Education) None.

**Testimony Against:** (Appropriations) None.

**Persons Testifying:** (Higher Education) (In support of substitute bill) Senator Carlson, prime sponsor; Kyra Kester, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

**Persons Testifying:** (Appropriations) (With concerns) Chris Reykdal, SBCTC and Bob Butts, OSPI..

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** (Higher Education) (In support of substitute bill) Terry Teale, Council of Presidents.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** (Appropriations) None.