
Education Committee

SSB 5505

Brief Description: Providing course study options for public high schools.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Carlson, Rasmussen, Honeyford, Doumit and Eide).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires public high schools to offer a program for students who plan to pursue work or career opportunities after high school graduation.
- Permits the State Board of Education to waive these requirements based on district size and staff availability.

Hearing Date: 3/20/03

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

In 1993 the Legislature enacted education reform measures that include four general student learning goals required of school districts. Goal Four requires districts to provide students with opportunities to understand the importance of work and how student actions affect future career opportunities. The legislation also directed schools to provide high school students, who have completed the Certificate of Mastery, with the opportunity to pursue career and educational objectives through educational pathways that emphasize the integration of academic and vocational education. Finally, the legislation repealed and did not replace instructions to school districts on vocational education.

In addition to references to occupational goals and pathway opportunities included in current law, the State Board of Education (SBE) has adopted graduation requirements to help implement the law. Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students must receive a minimum of one credit in occupational education, complete a culminating project, and complete a high school and beyond plan that includes education or work goals for the first year after high school.

In 2002 with the enactment of SSB 5940, the Office of the Superintendent of Public

Instruction (OSPI) was directed to establish standards for career and technical education programs. In addition, the OSPI was to review and approve local district plans for the delivery of career and technical education, provide technical assistance to local districts, and serve as the state adviser to career and technical organizations that support students and teachers.

The first section of SSB 5940 was vetoed by Governor Locke. In his veto message, the Governor stated: "Section [one] of the bill would have established different expectations for school districts based on their current program offering. School districts currently offering career and technical education programs would be required to continue those programs, while districts that are not currently offering those programs are only encouraged to establish them. I urge all school districts to establish career and technical education programs, but cannot support a provision that requires some, but not all, school districts to do so. In addition, the requirement to provide career and technical education programs infringes on local school board decision-making."

Currently, there are 300,624 full-time equivalent students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. Of those students, 20 percent, or 60,129 full-time equivalent students, are enrolled in career and technical programs in the public schools. Enrollment in the programs has grown steadily since 1991.

Summary of Bill:

In addition to providing a program for students who plan to attend baccalaureate institutions, all public high schools must provide a program for students who plan to pursue other career or work opportunities.

The program may provide exploratory and preparatory opportunities that include occupation-specific skills, employability and leadership skills, the skills required for industry certification, and the skills required to enter a postsecondary education or training program.

The SBE may waive these requirements based on district size and staff availability. When considering waiver requests, the SBE must consider the extent to which the school district offered such programs prior to the 2003-2004 school year.

Differences Between SHB 1487 and SSB 5505

SHB 1487 required school districts to offer two different career and technical courses of study, one for students seeking a professional or technical degree or certificate and one for students who plan to defer further education and enter the world of work directly upon high school graduation. The programs had specific required components. SHB 1487 is resting peacefully in House Appropriations.

SSB 5505 requires public high schools to offer a program for students who don't plan to attend a baccalaureate institution directly after high school. The components of the program are voluntary. The waiver language directs the SBE to consider whether a school district has offered such programs before the 2003-2004 school year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 13, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.