

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5139

C 59 L 04

Synopsis as Enacted

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

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

Senate Committee on Higher Education

House Committee on Higher Education

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Colleges and universities all over the country provide remedial courses for under-prepared students. During the last few years a growing concern has emerged over the costs of these courses to the students and to the state both in time and in money. While students who have been away from the academic environment for a number of years, or who are learning English as a second language, or facing other mitigating factors might need to complete some pre-college coursework, concern has been raised about the number of students right out of high school who are not prepared to do college level work. Many believe the high school diploma should demonstrate a readiness to succeed in college coursework.

A report from the state of California indicates that the California State University system recently threw out 8.2 percent of its freshmen for failing to master basic English or math skills, the highest rate in the four years it has tracked such dismissals.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the four-year institutions have issued reports about the role of pre-college course enrollment.

Summary: The Legislature recognizes current work among education sectors to strengthen communication with parents and students about what students need to do to gain and maintain the skills necessary to do college-level work. The Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction are directed – within current budgets – to convene a work group to discuss standards and expectations for college-level work, identify the causes of current gaps in students' knowledge and skills, and initiate actions to address those gaps so that the need for remediation of recent high school graduates is reduced. The work group includes representatives of the two- and four-year colleges and K-12 school districts. Strategies must be developed for communicating the standards in all Washington high schools. A report is due December 15, 2004, to legislative education and higher education committees including strategies, timelines, and benchmarks for reducing remediation over the next three years.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0	
House	94	1	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2004