

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5370

As of January 31, 2007

Title: An act relating to job skills training for juvenile offenders.

Brief Description: Addressing job skills training for juvenile offenders.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Berkey, Rasmussen and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/31/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Eric Bratton (786-7438)

Background: The Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration operates five residential schools for juvenile offenders. The law requires those school districts where the residential schools are found to conduct a program of education for the school's residents. The school districts are responsible for employing and supervising staff, providing textbooks and other instructional materials and equipment, and developing and implementing the curriculum. They are also responsible for adopting rules of conduct and disciplining students that violate those rules while participating in the education programs. In addition, the school districts are responsible for the expenditure of state, federal, and private funds allocated to them for the direct and indirect costs of maintaining and operating the education programs in the schools.

School districts must make the education programs available to residents who are at least three and less than 21 years of age and have not met high school graduation requirements. Besides giving students 180 days of instruction, the school districts must also provide special education and vocational education programs to address the unique needs and limitations of any students that require such attention. School districts must create educational programs that are as similar as practical to the educational programs they offer their nonresidential students.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the chief administrator of each residential school is responsible for providing: (1) transportation for residential school students to and from any education sites that are part of the program; (2) building and playground facilities; (3) furniture, fixtures, and equipment needed to conduct the program of education; and (4) utilities, janitorial services, and maintenance. DSHS and the chief administrator are also responsible for employing and supervising transportation staff, and providing clinical and medical evaluation services.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The Director of the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation (Director) and those school districts that have residential schools found within their borders will develop and implement a job skills training program as part of the division's and the district's overall treatment and educational responsibilities to juvenile offenders in all residential schools. The Director and the school districts will assure that: (1) the educational programs offered are occupationally based and provide a wide-range of prevocational skills necessary to career development; (2) the vocational skills obtained are transferable to the emerging labor market; and (3) the basic skill offerings include remedial and advanced skills in workplace communication, negotiation, teamwork, and problem solving.

The Director and the school districts will also develop a system-wide process for evaluating all youth based on self-management skills, employability skills, and life skills. Working closely with the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the Director and the school districts will assure that credit is awarded toward high school completion, and, working closely with local business organizations, they will provide information and career awareness to youth in all facilities and provide institutional work experience opportunities coordinated with educational programs to reinforce learning and the application of skills.

The Director and the school districts will consult with the Employment Security Department, the Office of the SPI, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board on the design, implementation, coordination, and management of the job skills training programs. In addition, the Director will ensure that all facility counselors are trained in youth employment skills assessment and development.

School districts will make vocational education opportunities available to each student between the ages of 14 and 21. The vocational programs offered should be occupationally based and provide skills that are transferrable to the emerging labor markets.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2007.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Juvenile offenders need to be given the opportunity to reform and attain skills that will help them become productive citizens. A strong job skills training program will help stop the recidivism rate for juvenile offenders. Students that slip through the system and end up in residential centers need something to help them stop the fall. There are no better tools to reach many juvenile offenders than vocational and educational programs in the residential schools. Something like this is desperately needed to connect youth to community. Technical concerns with the bill were expressed.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Trent Phillips, DSHS; Matt Zuvich, Washington Federation of State Employees; Mary Dean, Community Youth Services.