

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5122

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 3, 2015

Title: An act relating to precollege placement measures.

Brief Description: Concerning precollege placement measures.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Frockt, Lias, Bailey and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/29/15, 2/03/15 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Kohl-Welles, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Frockt, Lias and Miloscia.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: In 2013, under SB 5712, the Legislature directed the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to encourage colleges to use multiple measures to determine whether a student must enroll in a precollege course. Additionally the SBCTC must require colleges to post information about available options for course placement on their website and in admissions materials.

In September 2014, the six public baccalaureate institutions and SBCTC agreed to use the eleventh grade Smarter Balanced Assessment scores of level three or four to enroll first-year college students who have been admitted into entry-level college math and English courses without further placement testing. The agreement applies to high school graduating classes of 2016 through 2018, and then will be renewed or modified. Colleges, universities, and high schools are also designing math and English language arts transition courses for high school seniors who did not score at a level three or above. Several high schools are already piloting the curriculum. Seniors who earn a B or above in the classes will also be able to bypass placement testing at many colleges.

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.

Under current law, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) must collaborate with appropriate state agencies and stakeholders to improve student transitions and success, which includes but is not limited to, setting minimum college admissions standards.

Summary of Bill: The public baccalaureate institutions may use multiple measures to determine whether a student must enroll in a precollege course including, but not limited to, placement tests, the SAT, high school transcripts, college transcripts, or initial class performance. These institutions must post information about available options for course placement on their websites and in admissions materials.

WSAC must encourage the use of multiple measures to determine precollege placement when setting minimum college admissions standards.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: Two years ago the Legislature required community and technical colleges to post multiple measures on their websites. The value for that is that when students show up on the day class starts they don't have to have an assessment done at that time to determine whether they can enter into higher-level courses. Precollege education is enormously expensive. We need to find a way to bypass some of these costs as well as time spent by students in noncredit courses. Students might be able to benefit from a module rather than an entire semester of math or reading.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor.