
Education Committee

HB 1414

Brief Description: Improving access to career opportunities for students.

Sponsors: Representatives Connors, Paul, Rude, Springer, Couture, Keaton, McClintock, Penner, Davis, Tharinger, Shavers and Timmons.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Department of Labor, to establish a work group to recommend changes to state laws and practices affecting the training, certification, and employment of 16- and 17-year-olds enrolled in or who completed career and technical education programs.

Hearing Date: 2/11/25

Staff: Damian Morden-Snipper (786-7296) and Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Career and Technical Education.

Career and technical education (CTE) is a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options and supports basic academic and life skills.

Students must earn one CTE credit to qualify for graduation, but the State Board of Education permits students to meet this requirement through a qualifying occupational education course. Both exploratory and preparatory CTE courses must comply with the standards established by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Students participate in CTE through instruction delivered in several ways, including through programs at middle and high schools and approved online courses. Instruction in CTE programs is also provided at skill centers, which are the regional instructional venues that provide access to comprehensive,

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industry-defined CTE programs. Skill centers are established by a cooperative agreement and operated by a host school district.

Worksite learning is part of a CTE program where a student has sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at educational institutions that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, which are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

Employment Laws for Minors.

Federal and state laws regulate the employment, hours, and wages of minors (persons under 18 years of age). Where state laws and federal laws differ regarding labor of minors, the law that affords stricter protections prevails.

The Washington Industrial Welfare Act directs the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to establish requirements and restrictions on the wages, working hours, and other conditions for the employment of minors in nonagricultural trades and occupations. Work permits are issued to employers by L&I for the employment of minors, and L&I sets rules for the protection of the safety, health, and welfare of minors.

Minors also may not perform certain hazardous work, which L&I rules refer to as "prohibited duties." These include operating or working near dangerous power-driven machinery such as forklifts, woodworking machines, powered food slicers and grinders; handling highly toxic chemicals; or working higher than 10 feet off the ground or floor level. Employers issued a work permit must demonstrate that the proposed employment of a minor meets L&I's rules and health, safety, and welfare standards.

An employer may apply for a variance through L&I, which would allow for a temporary exception to the normal work restrictions for minors based on certain criteria. A student-learner variance allows 16- and 17-year olds to operate selected machinery and do other hazardous activities that would otherwise be prohibited by L&I rule. The work must be done as part of certain CTE worksite learning programs. The variance will be granted only if the hazardous activity is incidental to the worksite learning program, intermittent, and closely supervised by a journey-level worker, qualified instructor, or mentor.

Summary of Bill:

The OSPI, in consultation with the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), is directed to convene a work group to assess laws, rules, and policies affecting the training, certification, and employment of 16- and 17-year-olds who are enrolled in or completed career and technical education programs. The work group membership must include specified entities, groups, and interests, where feasible.

The work group must make recommendations for changes to laws, rules, and policies necessary to improve students' access to sustained interactions with industry and community professionals

and provide firsthand engagement with the tasks required for the various career fields, while also maintaining appropriate protections for the safety and welfare of minors. The recommendations must be submitted to the Legislature in an initial report by December 1, 2025, and in a final report by October 1, 2026.

In developing its recommendations, the work group is directed to focus on several agency-imposed restrictions related to minors who have completed, are participating in, or are training for a career and technical education (CTE) program, a certification, or a licensure. Activities the work group is required to engage in include:

- identifying barriers preventing the training, certification, or employment of minors who are participating in or have completed a CTE program;
- assessing categories of work from which L&I has prohibited minors from engaging but where minors may have received licenses from a state agency or other regulatory authority;
- assessing agency restrictions on working hours or schedules of minors participating in or who have completed a CTE program; and
- assessing requirements and procedures for school districts to receive approval to teach CTE, including whether those requirements and procedures relate to agency-imposed age restrictions.

The OSPI, L&I, and other affected agencies are allowed to initiate rules changes based on the work group's recommendations prior to the release of the work group's reports or legislative actions as long as these changes comply with federal and state law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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