

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5790

As Amended by House, April 18, 2007

Title: An act relating to skill centers.

Brief Description: Regarding skill centers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hobbs, Rockefeller, Rasmussen, Fairley, McAuliffe, Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Hatfield, Clements, Jacobsen and Shin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/12/07, 2/22/07 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/26/07, 3/05/07 [DP2S].
Passed Senate: 3/09/07, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5790 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Eide, Hewitt, Kauffman, Oemig, Rasmussen and Weinstein.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5790 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: About 7,000 students from 85 school districts attend one of the ten skill centers operating in the state. Many of the students attend part-time. Skill centers operate under cooperative agreements among participating school districts and primarily provide students with instruction in career and technical education. The superintendents of the participating school districts serve on an administrative council that governs the skill center. Skill centers

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receive state funding based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students at an enhanced funding rate. However, no student can be counted as more than one FTE, even if the time actually spent by the student at the skill center and the sending district adds up to more than one FTE.

Last session, the Legislature directed the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to conduct a study and make recommendations for increasing access to skill centers.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: A new RCW chapter is created addressing skill centers. Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, students attending skill centers are allowed to be counted up to 1.4 full time equivalent (FTE) students combining both their attendance at the resident high school and skills center.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public (OSPI) must review and revise the guidelines for skill centers and create rules to encourage expansion of skill center programs including revising the threshold enrollment so that a program need not have a minimum of 70 percent of the students enrolled on the core campus, thereby encouraging satellite or branch campuses. Satellite and branch campuses are encouraged to address high-demand fields. OSPI must develop a ten-year capital plan for legislative review and, subject to funding, conduct additional feasibility studies and develop a master plan to connect skill centers to the K-20 network. Subject to funding, skill centers will provide access to late afternoon and evening sessions, and summer school programs. When possible, these programs will target school dropouts and students at-risk of dropping out of school. Skill centers that receive this funding must participate in an evaluation of the programs. OSPI must establish and support skill centers of excellence in key economic sectors of regional significance. Once established, OSPI must develop and seek funding for a grant program for Running Start for career and technical programs that is targeted to high-demand occupations. Grant recipients must assist in replicating the model career and technical education programs of study. OSPI must ensure the funds generated by skill center students under Initiative 728 are returned to the skill centers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: We need to pay more attention to skill centers. The enrollment at skill centers is not expanding proportionately with the rest of our education system. The system caters to those students going to college. We have neglected the students who want to do something different. The skill centers allow students to use their academic learning in an applied and practical way and provides a very positive impact on students' lives. Skill center programs provide great value to apprenticeship programs by providing the basics that industry needs. Our workforce needs these students and they can be successful in these programs. This bill will increase student access to skill center programs. Our skill center serves very high-poverty students who are very successful in the skill center programs. Skill centers augment the course offerings of a school district and can promote articulation to higher education as well as industry. The expanded FTE will balance the funding, which currently acts as a disincentive, and shows

support for the school district and the skill center. The availability of branch campuses is important to districts where they need to address traffic congestion in high density areas.

OTHER: There needs to be different language addressing the capital budget provision to make it work. The bill requires skill centers who get funding for late afternoon, evening and summer sessions to participate in an evaluation but it is unclear who conducts the evaluation and where the funds for the evaluation will come.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; Horst Momber, North East Vocational Advisory Committee; John Aultman, New Market Skill Center; Thomas Bierne, New Market Skill Center; Gerry Ringwood, Tri-Tech Skill Center; John Merk, S.E. Washington/N.E. Oregon Sheet Metal; Craig Dwight, Yakima Valley Technical Skill Center; Paul Rosier, Washington Association of School Administrators; Kathleen Lopp, Washington Association for Career and Technical Education; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Wes Pruitt, WFTECB; Charlie Brown, Bethel School District; Mike Christiansen, Bethel School District; Mitch Denning, Alliance of Education Associations.

OTHER: Kyra Kester, OSPI.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill is about providing expanded career and technical education which are part of providing personalized education experiences for all students. The enrollment at skill centers is not expanding proportionately with the rest of our education system. The provisions of this bill are designed to allow for Skills Centers to expand and provide career and technical education programs in rural and remote areas.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; John Aultman, New Market Skill Center; Thomas Bierne, New Market Skill Center; Jennifer Priddy, OSPI.

House Amendment(s): The position of Director of Skill Centers is created within OSPI. Changes the maximum funding for skill center students from 2.0 FTEs to 1.6 FTEs or as determined in the omnibus appropriations act. Requires OSPI to develop procedures for determining how to allocate the FTEs between the resident high school and the skill center. Maintains the other provisions.