

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5766

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 14, 1991

Brief Description: Creating an academic excellence program for at-risk youth.

SPONSORS: Senators Pelz, Bailey, Rinehart, Erwin, Murray, Anderson, A. Smith, Newhouse, Stratton and Bauer.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Anderson, Murray, Oke, Pelz, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

Staff: Larry Davis (786-7422)

Hearing Dates: March 6, 1991

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

BACKGROUND:

Research findings indicate that among at-risk youth a disproportionate number of minority youth are affected by substance abuse, gang activity, unemployment and teen pregnancy. Current programs may not be adequately addressing the needs of at-risk minority youth. A model program targeted at minority at-risk youth is one way to explore strategies to respond to the needs of such youth.

SUMMARY:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is the lead agency, working with the Employment Security Department, and the Department of Social and Health Services, the State Board for Vocational Education, in developing and administering Project DREAM (Dare to Reach for Educational Aspirations and Marks), a pilot program for academic excellence for under-achieving, at-risk students. The program is not limited to but must focus on serving minority students.

Students eligible to participate are those age 14 through 21 who: are one or more grade levels behind in basic skills or have not graduated from high school or successfully completed the general educational development test; have violated building or district rules of conduct at least three times in the same school year; are from an historically disadvantaged group; and have a family income level below the median level for the state.

Project DREAM is initially limited to the school districts of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, Yakima and Pasco. The program begins the school year following receipt of federal funds by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the program, and ends at the completion of the fourth school year following implementation of the program.

The participating districts under Project DREAM must provide: academic counseling and outreach; parent and family outreach; employment/vocational counseling and training; substance abuse awareness and counseling and treatment as necessary; teen pregnancy/parenting counseling; and positive self-image building.

The participating districts are responsible for screening, training, and employing adult supervisors for the participating students. Adult advisors are responsible for working with no more than 15 at-risk students, meeting weekly with each student and bi-weekly with each student's teachers, school counselor, parents/guardians, and family members; and facilitating each student's contact with health care providers, vocational counselors, job service centers, and job interviews.

Participating students are responsible for complying with all regulations governing participation, meeting weekly with their adult advisor, and maintaining a personal written or audio portfolio, attending all programs, seminars, and training sessions arranged by their advisor, and maintaining regular attendance at school, work, or both.

The participating districts design the specific local program under Project DREAM. Districts must consider certain activities in designing the local program, including working with the job service centers and the Department of Social and Health Services. Districts submit an annual report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction on the effectiveness of their programs.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction submits an annual report to the Legislature on Project DREAM, beginning December 1 of the second school year following implementation of the program. The SPI reports include the total number of students that have participated and the success of the local programs.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is directed to organize a speakers' bureau, including prominent minority role models, meet with community and business leaders to market Project DREAM, and coordinate with other state and local agencies a centralized data base of preexisting services that can meet the purposes of Project DREAM.

Identified state agencies involved with the SPI in Project Dream are required to assist with necessary technical support for participating districts.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

While there are programs to help at-risk students, many people are involved in providing assistance but no one person is responsible for coordinating all the services. Providing assistance on a case management basis is cost effective.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: FOR: Senator Dwight Pelz, prime sponsor; Angela Toussaint for Dr. Peggy Tribble, psychologist, Seattle School District

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

A person does not have to possess a teacher or educational staff associate certificate to be an adult advisor.

A student may also be a parent or pregnant to be eligible to participate in the program.