

***Criminal Justice & Corrections***

***HB 1260***

***Brief Description:*** *Establishing a postsecondary education program for inmates.*

***Sponsors:*** *Representatives Lovick, Ballasiotes, O'Brien, Kagi and Haigh.*

***Brief Summary of Bill***

- *Requires the Department of Corrections to implement a one year pilot post-secondary educational program for inmates.*
- *Requires the Department of Corrections to offer, through a request for proposal process, an opportunity for community and four-year colleges to provide post-secondary educational courses to inmates on a self-pay system.*
- *Requires the Department of Corrections to prepare a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2002 evaluating the pilot post-secondary educational program.*

***Hearing Date:*** *2/2/01*

***Staff:*** *Yvonne Walker (786-7841).*

***Background:***

*In 1995, the Legislature adopted a law requiring the Department of Corrections (DOC) to prioritize its available resources to meet the following educational goals, specified in order of priority (HB 2010):*

- (1) *Achievement of basic academic skills through obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, and achievement of vocational skills necessary for purposes of work programs and for an inmate to qualify for work upon release;*
- (2) *Additional work and education programs that are compatible with an offender's*

- case management plan; and*
- (3) *Other work and education programs as appropriate.*

*The 1995 legislation required the DOC to develop a formula by which inmates would contribute to the cost of certain educational and vocational programs based on their ability to pay. The formula requires offenders to pay a portion of the costs or tuition for any second or subsequent vocational program associated with their work programs and any A.A. or B.A. programs that are part of their case management plans. The formula also requires offenders to pay all costs and tuition of any post-secondary academic program and any second or subsequent vocational program that is not part of their case management plan.*

*As a result of these statutory priorities, which were implemented in the context of a 5 percent reduction in the department's education budget, many post-secondary academic programs and vocational programs were eliminated from state correctional institutions.*

***Summary of Bill:***

*The DOC is required to implement a one year pilot post-secondary educational program for inmates. The department must ensure that the pilot program tries to address all modes of instruction that inmates are eligible to use including distance learning and other technologies.*

*The department must offer, through a request for proposal (RFP) process, an opportunity for community and four-year colleges to provide post-secondary educational courses to inmates on a self-pay system. Although the department must provide any necessary space and administrative support to any college or university providing classes, each individual inmate is responsible for paying all costs and tuition associated with participating in the courses.*

*Inmates may use their own funds and funds deducted by the DOC from their personal inmate savings account for the sole purposes of their post-secondary educational classes. The department may not preclude an inmate from participating in a post-secondary education course based upon the inmate's release date or custody level.*

*The DOC must select one prison for females and one prison for males to implement the pilot program.*

*The DOC must submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2002. The report must include recommendations regarding whether the pilot post-secondary educational program should be extended and stating the number of inmates who participated in the program.*

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

***Appropriation: None.***

***Fiscal Note: Available.***