
Higher Education Committee

SSB 5139

Brief Description: Concerning student preparation for college-level work.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senator Carlson).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expects various education sectors to engage in an organized strategy to reduce remediation of recent high school graduates.
- Directs the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to study the extent school districts can provide adequate course sections to prepare students for college-level work and make recommendations to fill gaps.

Hearing Date: 2/18/04

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

A precollege class refers to academic work taken by postsecondary students that is required for college-level study in English and mathematics. Precollege classes do not carry credit and are not accepted for transfer into baccalaureate or transfer associate degree programs.

Of the high school graduating class of 2002, approximately 29 percent (18,022 students) enrolled immediately in a community or technical college for the 2002-03 academic year. More than half (57 percent) of these students enrolled in one or more precollege classes in their first year of attendance at the college. An additional 19 percent (11,675 students) of graduates enrolled in a community or technical college within one or two years after graduation, where more than one-third (35 percent) take a precollege class.

For 2003, the public four-year institutions reported the following number of students within three years of high school graduation enrolled in precollege classes:

University of Washington:	101
Washington State University:	35
Central Washington University:	549
Eastern Washington University:	1,437
Western Washington University:	88
The Evergreen State College:	Not Applicable

In part, the lower numbers are due to competitive admission standards, but institutions also have different ways of providing remedial services for students. Some require students to take precollege classes through a community or technical college; one provides supplemental tutoring rather than requiring the student to enroll in a separate class.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature's intent is to continue and strengthen current initiatives across education sectors to communicate to students and parents what students need to do to gain math, writing, and reading skills necessary for college-level work. Before the beginning of the 2005 session, the sectors will engage in an organized strategy to reduce remediation among recent high school graduates.

Subject to funding, the Institute will report the extent that school districts can provide enough sections of the courses students need to gain math, writing, and reading skills in preparation for college-level work. The Institute will make recommendations about how to fill any gaps revealed through this research. A preliminary report is due to the Legislature by September 1, 2004, and a final report is due December 1, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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