

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSCR 8401

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Brief Description: Authorizing an interim study creating a master plan for education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Carlson, Johnson, Shin, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Schmidt, Rasmussen and B. Sheldon).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 4/1/03, 4/4/03 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Directs the House and Senate Education and Higher Education committees to convene a joint work session before December 31, 2003, to share the results of their interim work on strategic planning, coordination, and governance in K-12 and higher education.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Boldt, Buck, Chase, Clements, Condotta, Gombosky, Jarrett, Lantz, McCoy and Morrell.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Across the nation, governance and planning for the three levels of public education (preschool, K-12, and postsecondary) is rarely overseen by the same state agencies or legislative committees. Some states have begun to form statewide partnerships in an attempt to coordinate policies in such areas as academic preparation and achievement standards, graduation and admission requirements, and teacher preparation. These efforts are described as creating "K-16," "P-16," or "PreK-20" systems.

According to the National Conference on State Legislatures, at least 24 states have statewide K-16 partnerships, most created through agreements between agencies rather than by legislation or other directive. Washington is not listed as one of these states.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The House and Senate Education and Higher Education committees each intend to examine issues of strategic planning, coordination, and governance during the 2003 interim. Therefore, the four committees will meet jointly, along with education and higher education stakeholders, before December 31, 2003. The purpose of the joint work session will be to share the results of the committees' interim work; discuss common topics and themes that cross education sectors; and discuss opportunities for further collaboration in policy development and oversight.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

A work group composed of members of the House and Senate Education and Higher Education committees is replaced with a single joint work session among the four committees, to be held prior to December 31, 2003. Instead of developing recommendations for a "Master Plan for Education: Prekindergarten through University," the committees and stakeholders will share findings from their separate interim work in K-12 and higher education and discuss common topics that cross education sectors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Testimony For: (In support of Substitute Bill) The subject matter of K-16 is not new to any of us. Everyone has thought about how to establish a more seamless system of education in our state. The purpose of the bill is to set up a group of legislators who will work with stakeholders, examine the issues, and make recommendations for how to go about developing a master plan. This is not development of the plan itself. We have needed this study for years. Every state education agency should be willing to put itself under the microscope in a comprehensive governance review. All forms of collaboration across education sectors are positive. This is a feasibility study for how we might develop a comprehensive master plan that incorporates prekindergarten, K-12, and higher education. If the end result is to expand access, improve quality, and eliminate barriers to a seamless education, then this is a step in the right direction.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support of Substitute Bill) Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; Bobbie May, State Board of Education; Donna Obermeyer, Washington State Special Education Coalition; Bruce Botka, Higher Education Coordinating Board; and Amanda Feutz, Washington Student Lobby.