

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 3094

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 27, 2004

Title: An act relating to studying the expansion of high school skills centers.

Brief Description: Studying the expansion of high school skills centers.

Sponsors: Representatives Ormsby, Cox, Haigh, Kagi, Priest, McCoy, Fromhold, Condotta, Chase, Upthegrove, Schual-Berke, Kenney and Morrell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/24/04, 2/27/04 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Johnson, Chair; Finkbeiner, Vice Chair; Carlson, McAuliffe, Pflug, Rasmussen and Schmidt.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Ten high school vocational skills centers currently operate in Washington. The centers provide an opportunity for students in grades 11 or 12 to receive job training, including academic and work skills, as part of the public educational system. The skills centers are operated as an extension of high schools by local school districts who have joined together. An administrative council comprised of the superintendents of the participating districts govern the skill centers. There are 85 school districts that are members of a skills center consortium.

Summary of Bill: By March 15, 2005, the Legislative Audit and Review Committee must conduct a study of the Washington vocational skills centers. The review must include the information on the success of skills centers to prepare students for future jobs, an analysis of fiscal resources available for skills centers and any resource conflicts there may be which support school districts, and an analysis of factors that encourage and discourage student enrollment at school centers. The committee must consult with skill center consortia school districts, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Work Force Training and Education Coordinating Board, the State Apprenticeship and Training Council, and the Center for Career and Technical Education.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: There is a lot of information out there on various issues involving the skills centers, including barriers and disincentives for school districts to participate in skills centers but that information is fragmented. This bill would require all that information to be brought together through a review process. Hopefully, this information will help us make more effective utilization of skills centers, which currently provide a very valuable community resource for students to develop the maturity and certified skills to participate in the workforce. The main reason for this bill is the funding disincentives for school districts which include the limits of the FTE ratio. There is some interest in using a funding formula similar to that used for the Running Start program.

Concerns: Wonder if JLARC is the correct entity to do the study instead of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The list of issues that the study should review should specifically include the funding disincentives for school districts to use skill centers. The date for JLARC to report on the study should be moved back to December 1.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Rep. Tim Ormsby, prime sponsor; Wes Pruitt, WFTECB; Greg Williamson, OSPI. PRO W/CONCERNS: Dan Steele, WSSDA; John Aultman, New Market Skills Center.