

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6138

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, January 22, 2004

Title: An act relating to a master plan for education from prekindergarten through university.

Brief Description: Developing a master plan for education from prekindergarten through university.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Carlson, Rasmussen, Schmidt and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/15/04, 1/22/04 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6138 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Carlson, Chair; Schmidt, Vice Chair; Kohl-Welles, B. Sheldon and Shin.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: Research suggests that creating a more integrated, seamless education system involves grappling with a host of complex issues, including standards, testing, educator preparation, college admissions policies, governance, and funding streams to name just a few. Over the past decade, a number of states have begun to move away from dealing with such issues on a piecemeal basis in favor of a more comprehensive approach. The shorthand term for such initiatives, P-16 or P-20, reflects the central vision of a coherent, flexible continuum of public education that stretches from preschool through the baccalaureate degree and beyond.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A collaborative interim study must make recommendations for the development of a "Master Plan for Education – Prekindergarten through University." The Senate and the House of Representatives Education and Higher Education committees must collaboratively develop a plan to make recommendations to the Legislature. The recommendations will address but not be limited to issues of access, achievement, accountability, affordability, and quality of our schools and institutions of higher education.

Involved in the work group are interested parties, including but not limited to educators – staff, faculty, administration, and governing board members, from both the public and private sector – regional and national public policy groups and state organizations; advocacy groups; researchers; business and labor leaders; community leaders; parents and students.

An interim report must be completed by December 1, 2004. The final report must be completed by December 1, 2005, if needed. The work group uses legislative facilities and staff from Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Use of legislative staff is clarified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Discussion about need for improved articulation among all education sectors—seamless education. Remember there are 33,000 projected new college students; must coordinate all service delivery and focus on students. California's work can provide a useful example. The HECB Strategic Master Plan might be the cart before the horse. Joint planning and communication is imperative in running a K-20 system. How would this work with current planning efforts – what will happen to the HECB/SMP and the work of the 2076 Work Group? – do not need duplicative planning efforts.

Including very young children as a part of the planning recognizes brain development begins at birth. Child care should be included in the education sector. Quality child care leads to success in education. We are the last industrial nation without a child care policy. Children benefit significantly from positive quality child care programs. Success throughout the education system is enhanced by early support and success.

Students support the planning process and believe it will point out the gaps in the current system. They also hope it might lead to college readiness, a rational tuition policy, effective collaboration between the two-year and four-year sector, greater high school and college collaboration, standardization of curriculum and more available high school counseling.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Cindy Hough, SBCTC; Stu Jacobson, WA Parents for Safe Child Care; Agda Burchard, WA Assn. for the Ed. of Young Children and the Collaborative; Nat Caminos, UW, WSL.