
Education Committee

HB 2485

Brief Description: Making a college placement test available for high school students.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunter, Jarrett, Talcott and Tom.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to make a college placement test available for school districts to administer to 10th and 11th grade students.
- Expects districts to encourage, but not require, students to take the test.

Hearing Date: 1/16/06

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Colleges and universities use a number of different tests to help determine whether students are prepared for college-level work. To place new students in the appropriate level of English or mathematics courses, community and technical colleges in Washington generally use the ASSET or COMPASS test available from American College Test, Inc. (ACT), or the ACCUPLACER test available from the College Board. Four-year universities consider Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or ACT scores in their decisions for admission, but rely on a different set of tests developed by the University of Washington to assist them in determining the appropriate math course for incoming students. Most students take these tests in 11th or 12th grade. The College Board and ACT also market tests geared to 10th grade students, such as the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) from the College Board or PLAN from ACT.

Some high schools in Washington are working with local community or technical colleges to administer college placement tests to 10th or 11th grade students as a way to provide early information about college readiness. They also use the results as a planning and guidance tool with students. In its interim report to the Legislature, the Washington Learns steering committee recommended use of college placement tests for all 10th or 11th grade students for this purpose.

Summary of Bill:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must make a college placement test available for school districts to offer to 10th or 11th grade students annually. The test must be selected from

commercially available products. Districts must encourage, but cannot require, students to take the test.

The test is intended to assist students, parent, and teachers in the selection of high school courses and to gauge student readiness for college study, including dual enrollment programs.

The SPI compiles data from the tests so that results can be analyzed. Aggregate results are made available to the public and the Legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 10, 2006.

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