

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5717

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to K-12 skill centers.

Brief Description: Authorizing incentive funds to maintain or increase the number of students in skill centers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rockefeller, Benton, Fairley, Oke, Keiser, Zarelli, Shin, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/28/05, 3/30/05 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction, within funds appropriated, to provide incentives for school districts to maintain or increase the number of students participating in skills center instructional programs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Santos, Shabro and Tom.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

Ten skills centers currently provide Washington high school students with instruction in career and technical skills. Skills centers operate under cooperative agreements between participating school districts and are governed by an administrative council comprised of the superintendents of the participating districts, with each district having an equal vote in decision making. The centers generate full-time equivalent (FTE) funding and receive enhanced funding for those courses approved as career and technical education courses by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Students may be enrolled at a high school and a skills center simultaneously for an aggregate of instructional hours in excess of 1.0 FTE. Under current apportionment rules adopted by the

OSPI, a student may not generate funding of more than 1.0 FTE regardless of the aggregate enrolled hours of instruction between the high school and the skills center.

Under the Running Start program a student's enrollment in high school courses and his/her enrollment in college or university courses are determined separately, allowing the student to generate more than 1.0 FTE.

Summary of Bill:

To the extent funds are appropriated, the OSPI must provide incentive funds to school districts to maintain or increase the number of students attending skills centers. The OSPI may adopt rules to implement the incentive funds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The intent of this bill is to eliminate the disincentive for school districts to send students to regional skills centers. School districts currently must give up a portion of the student's FTE funding and this functions as a loss of revenue for the sending district. The costs to the sending district don't go away just because a student enrolls in a skills center. The intent is to off-set that loss of FTE moneys.

School principals strongly support skills centers. When we talk about education working for all students, we include the concept of the various pathways students may choose. The idea of career and technical education skills appeals to many students.

This is a significant issue for the Workforce Board because of the need to address the gap between workforce skills and employer demands. We need to widen the pipeline for post-secondary career and technical education programs.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Rockefeller, prime sponsor; Rod Duckworth, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Rainer Houser, Association of Washington State Principals; John Aultman, New Market Skills Center; Mitch Denning, Alliance of Educational Associations; Kathleen Lopp, Washington Association for Career and Technical Educators; and Wes Pruitt, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.