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SENATE BILL 5441

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State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Senators Weinstein, McAuliffe, Prentice, Kohl-Welles, Eide, Berkey, Poulsen, Keiser, Brown, Fraser, Shin, Haugen, Schmidt, Kline, Rockefeller, Spanel and Rasmussen; by request of Governor Gregoire

Read first time 01/25/2005. Referred to Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to studying early learning, K-12, and higher  
2 education; creating new sections; providing an expiration date; and  
3 declaring an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

6 (1) The early years mark the most extraordinary period of growth  
7 for young children. The state's role in providing access to early  
8 learning opportunities has never been consistently defined;

9 (2) More than a quarter of a century has passed since the current  
10 school finance system was first created, and the challenges facing our  
11 schools and students have grown and changed dramatically during that  
12 time. Policies have been established creating new expectations and  
13 goals for students under education reform;

14 (3) Demographic pressures and work force needs will continue to  
15 increase demand for access to postsecondary education and training.  
16 Public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education are also  
17 important avenues for programs such as adult basic education and  
18 English as a second language that are the foundation for employment and

1 further education for an increasing number of people. Students have  
2 paid an increasing cost of their education with tuition growing faster  
3 than personal income or inflation; and

4 (4) Through a comprehensive study, the legislature will have solid  
5 information to determine how best to use its resources to create a  
6 strong education system that will provide an educated citizenry and a  
7 thriving economy in this state.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The comprehensive education study  
9 steering committee is created.

10 (2) Members of the steering committee shall include: The governor  
11 who shall chair the steering committee; the director of the office of  
12 financial management; two members from the house of representatives  
13 with one appointed by each major caucus; two members from the senate  
14 with one appointed by each major caucus; four citizens appointed by the  
15 governor; and the chairs of each of the three advisory committees  
16 created under subsection (3) of this section. The chair of the  
17 advisory committee on K-12 shall be the superintendent of public  
18 instruction. The chair of the advisory committee on early learning  
19 shall be appointed by the governor from a list of names submitted by  
20 groups representing early learning. The chair of the advisory  
21 committee on higher education shall be selected by the governor from a  
22 list of three or more names submitted by the state board for community  
23 and technical colleges and the council of presidents.

24 (3) The steering committee shall appoint the members of the  
25 advisory committee on early learning, the advisory committee on K-12,  
26 and the advisory committee on higher education.

27 (4) The steering committee shall receive staff and logistical  
28 support from the office of financial management.

29 (5) Nonlegislative members of the steering committee shall be  
30 reimbursed for travel expenses under RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The steering committee:

32 (a) Shall direct and coordinate the studies created in this  
33 section. In conducting the studies, consideration shall be given to  
34 recently completed, related finance studies;

35 (b) May enter into contracts as needed to support the work of the  
36 study;

1 (c) Shall develop recommendations based on the work of the studies  
2 in this section; and

3 (d) Shall develop recommendations about how the state can best  
4 provide stable funding for student learning for young children,  
5 students in the public schools, and students in the public colleges and  
6 universities.

7 (2) A comprehensive K-12 finance study shall include, but not be  
8 limited to:

9 (a) The constitutional and legal requirements underlying the  
10 current finance system and how those requirements are affected by the  
11 goal under education reform to provide all students with the  
12 opportunity to achieve the state standards;

13 (b) The strengths and weaknesses of the current state and local  
14 finance formulas and how those formulas are used by local school  
15 districts to meet state requirements and student learning goals;

16 (c) Potential changes to the current finance system including the  
17 methods of allocating funds, levels of funding, and how student  
18 achievement is affected;

19 (d) Reviewing the funding systems in at least five other states;  
20 and

21 (e) Specific issues facing schools: Assuring program  
22 accountability; improving effectiveness in state-level governance;  
23 identifying efficiencies in district spending practices; providing  
24 programs that assist students in meeting standards; helping students  
25 stay in school; impacts of the certification requirements for teachers;  
26 and appropriate preparation requirements for paraeducators.

27 (3) A comprehensive study of early learning shall include, but not  
28 be limited to:

29 (a) Defining the populations being served, those that could be  
30 served, and program access;

31 (b) Determining the state's role in supporting quality early  
32 learning opportunities;

33 (c) Determining the state's role in training persons providing  
34 services; and

35 (d) Providing for smooth transitions to K-12 programs.

36 (4) A comprehensive study of higher education shall include, but  
37 not be limited to:

38 (a) Options for creating a new funding system;

1 (b) The number and distribution of enrollments at two and four-year  
2 institutions of higher education needed to meet demographic and work  
3 force training needs;

4 (c) Methods for determining the cost of instruction in various  
5 program areas;

6 (d) The appropriate share of the cost of instruction that should be  
7 funded through tuition, general fund-state subsidies, and financial  
8 aid;

9 (e) Providing for smooth transitions from high school to college,  
10 including dual credit options and adequate preparation for  
11 college-level coursework;

12 (f) Options for using existing capacity in independent colleges and  
13 universities;

14 (g) A review of higher education governance as it relates to fiscal  
15 policy for higher education; and

16 (h) Options for coordinating capital and operating appropriations.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act expires July 1, 2007.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
19 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
20 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect  
21 immediately.

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