
Higher Education Committee

HB 1986

Brief Description: Authorizing a peer mentoring pilot program at Western Washington University and a community or technical college.

Sponsors: Representatives Hasegawa, Anderson, Wallace, White and Sells.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a pilot mentoring project at Western Washington University (WWU).
- Requires WWU and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to identify a community or technical college to participate in the pilot project.
- Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board to award grants to participating institutions from the State Work Study program.
- Requires that the participating institutions submit a preliminary report to the Legislature by December 1, 2010 and a final report on December 1, 2011.

Hearing Date: 2/17/09

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304)

Background:

Definition: Mentoring is defined as a sustained relationship between a youth and an adult or an older youth. Through continued involvement, the adult or older student offers support, guidance, and assistance as the younger person goes through a difficult period, faces new challenges, faces academic challenges, or works through family and other social problems. In particular, where parents are either unavailable or unable to provide responsible guidance for their children, mentors can play a critical role.

Growth in mentoring programs: The number of mentoring programs has grown dramatically in recent years. This popularity results in part from compelling testimonials by people -- youth

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and adults alike -- who have themselves benefited from the positive influence of an older person who helped them endure social, academic, family, or personal crises.

How does a mentoring program work? Mentoring programs are established to match a suitable adult or older youth -- the mentor -- with a younger person. Potential mentors are recruited from various sources including high schools, colleges and universities, professional, and religious communities, as well as neighborhood citizens. Nominations for mentors are sought formally through a structured program and recruiting process and informally through flyers, posters, mailings, and word-of-mouth. Appropriately matching mentors with younger students is a key component of most programs. Matching can be done formally and informally through interviews, personal profiles, comparative interest inventories, and get-acquainted sessions. In some cases, mentoring occurs in a group setting in which groups of younger students are matched with a small group of older students or adults.

Research: While research on the effects of mentoring is scarce, some studies and program evaluations do support positive claims. In general terms, findings indicate that mentored students have much higher career goals, suggesting that the mentoring process may have triggered a greater concern for the future among the mentored students. Results have also shown that mentored students were doing better academically, on average, than students without mentors.

Summary of Bill:

Western Washington University must establish a peer mentoring pilot project in partnership with a community or technical college identified by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. The goals of the mentoring program include: (1) encourage elementary students to complete high school and pursue college; (2) provide positive role models; (3) develop a model that is scalable statewide; and (4) increase the percentage of students who pursue postsecondary education.

In establishing the pilot project, institutions must:

1. Recruit college students to serve as mentors and identify an elementary school or schools.
2. Develop a curriculum to train mentors.
3. Solicit grants, awards, and gifts.
4. Develop appropriate outcome measures.
5. Provide community outreach and publicity of the program.
6. Submit two reports to the Legislature; the first preliminary report is due by December 1, 2010 and the final report is due December 1, 2011.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board must make grants to participating institutions from the State Work Study Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 2009.

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