
Higher Education Committee

HB 2634

Brief Description: Promoting efficiencies including institutional coordination and partnerships in the community and technical college system.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlyle, Kagi and Morrell.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that community college districts coordinate with adjacent districts and avoid unnecessary duplication of student services and administrative functions.
- Stipulates that current community college districts will remain in effect until June 30, 2013 after which, the boundaries will be designated in rule by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).
- Requires the SBCTC to establish criteria and procedures for consolidating district structures to form multiple campus districts and, in collaboration with the boards of trustees, identify potential administrative efficiencies, complimentary administrative functions, and complimentary academic programs in adjacent college districts.
- Requires the SBCTC, by December 1, 2010, to adopt a detailed plan for implementation of changes.
- Requires the SBCTC, in consultation with the Higher Education Coordinating Board and college trustees, to identify adjacent college districts that can be consolidated or whose boundaries can be modified and adopt proposed consolidations by December 1, 2012.

Hearing Date: 1/15/10

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304).

Background:

Washington's Community and Technical College Act of 1991 provides for a state system of community and technical colleges separate from both the public secondary schools and four-year

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institutions. The act requires that the colleges "offer an open door to every citizen, regardless of his or her academic background or experiences, at a cost normally within his or her economic means".

Each of the 34 college districts is required to "offer thoroughly comprehensive educational, training, and service programs to meet the needs of both the communities and students served by combining high standards of excellence in academic transfer courses; realistic and practical courses in occupational education, both graded and ungraded; community services of an educational, cultural, and recreational nature; and adult education". As of 2007-08, four colleges were authorized to award applied baccalaureate degrees providing career advancement for technical associate degree graduates. Each district is governed by a board of five trustees appointed to five-year terms by the Governor with the consent of the Senate.

Community and technical colleges served nearly half a million people – 460,696 students, representing 169,189 full-time equivalents (FTEs) – in the 2007-08 academic year. The reason most commonly identified for attending the community and technical colleges was related to the workforce education mission – to prepare for a new job or upgrade existing job skills. Some 45 percent of students enrolled for a workforce purpose. Another 39 percent of students enrolled to pursue an academic transfer degree, while another 12 percent of students enrolled to take basic skills courses.

Summary of Bill:

Each of the 34 community college districts is required to coordinate with adjacent districts in offering education and training. The districts are also required to avoid unnecessary duplication of student services and administrative functions. The current district distinctions are made effective until June 30, 2013 at which point the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has the authority to consolidate district structures to form multiple campus districts and designate the boundaries in rule.

Prior to adopting any new district boundaries, the SBCTC must work in collaboration with the boards of trustees for the community and technical colleges to identify potential administrative efficiencies, complimentary administrative functions, and complimentary academic programs in adjacent college districts. The SBCTC must consider economic feasibility, cost savings, the extent to which changes will contribute to student access to academic programs, as well as the extent to which changes contribute to the vision, goals, priorities, and statewide strategies in the comprehensive master plan and the strategic master plan for higher education.

By December 1, 2010 the SBCTC must have developed and adopted a detailed implementation plan of any changes that would result in cost savings while maintaining student access and achievement. The plan must establish a time frame within which any proposed changes must be accomplished as well as any agreements established to provide complimentary academic programs or coordinate administrative functions. The implementation plan takes effect once it is approved by the SBCTC. Cost savings realized from the implementation are retained by the respective districts to be used for enhancing student access and success.

The SBCTC, working in consultation with the boards of trustees and the Higher Education Coordinating Board must identify adjacent college districts that can feasibly be consolidated or

whose boundaries can be modified. The SBCTC must consider the affect on student access and the extent of financial efficiencies in its deliberations. The SBCTC must have adopted proposed district consolidations or changes by December 1, 2012 and must submit any required legislative changes to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2010.

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