

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2621

As of February 18, 2010

Title: An act relating to designating resource programs for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics instruction in K-12 schools.

Brief Description: Designating resource programs for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics instruction in K-12 schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Orwall, Maxwell, Darneille, Morrell and Haigh.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/10, 94-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/24/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: In Washington the Legislature has directed a number of activities in recent years intended to enhance science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). STEM teaching and learning, such as revising the state mathematics and science standards, identifying recommended curricula, providing professional development to support the revised standards, increasing the high school graduation requirement in mathematics, and providing support for STEM learning activities such as FIRST Robotics and LASER.

There are also examples of locally initiated programs to provide enhanced learning opportunities for students in STEM, including at least three high schools geared to a STEM theme:

- Aviation High School (Highline School District);
- Delta High School (partnership of Kennewick, Pasco, Richland School Districts, Columbia Basin College, Washington State University Tri-Cities, and Battelle); and
- Science and Math Institute at Point Defiance (Tacoma School District).

Summary of Bill: If funds are appropriated for this purpose, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must designate up to three high schools to serve as resources and examples of how to combine the following best practices:

- a small, highly personalized learning community;
- an interdisciplinary curriculum with strong focus on STEM subjects, delivered through a project-based instructional approach; and

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- active partnerships with businesses and the local community.

The designated high schools serve as lighthouse programs to provide technical assistance and advice to other schools and communities who are in the initial stages of creating a STEM learning environment. They must have proven experience and be recognized as model programs. The Office of the SPI must work with the designated high schools to publicize their models of STEM instruction and encourage other high schools and communities to replicate similar models.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.