
Higher Education Committee

HB 2158

Brief Description: Including project lead-the-way examinations on the master list of postsecondary courses fulfilled by proficiency examinations.

Sponsors: Representatives Springer, Maxwell, Pettigrew, Seaquist and Hansen; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds Project Lead-the-Way examinations to the examinations that may be taken in high school to demonstrate college-level skills and for the purpose of meeting certain lower division general education or postsecondary professional technical education requirements.

Hearing Date: 12/12/11

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Demonstrating College-Level Skills

Legislation enacted in 2011, known as the Launch Year Act (E2SHB1808) required that all public high schools work toward the goal of offering a sufficient number of high school courses to give students the opportunity to earn the equivalent of one year's worth of postsecondary credit toward a certificate, apprenticeship program, technical degree, or associate or baccalaureate degree. Among other provisions, the legislation required that by December 2011, and biennially each June thereafter, institutions of higher education develop a master list of postsecondary courses that can be fulfilled by taking the Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or other recognized college level proficiency exams and achieving an agreed upon score or by meeting demonstrated competencies.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Each institution is required to publish on its website and in its admissions materials its own list of courses that qualify for credit for lower division general education requirements, including the qualifying exam scores and demonstrated competencies.

Project Lead-the Way

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is a non-profit organization that offers Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) education curricular programs used in middle and high schools across the U.S. The PLTW programs engage students in activities, projects, and problem-based learning which provides hands-on classroom experiences and allows students to create, discover, collaborate and solve problems and apply what they learn in math and science.

The PLTW curriculum integrates national academic and technical learning standards and STEM principles and includes mentorships and workplace experiences to expose students to STEM fields through local industry professionals.

The curriculum is provided free of charge to schools that register with the PLTW. Classroom equipment -- computer software and kits for hands-on activities -- along with teacher training, which is required, are the main costs related to the program. Project-based engineering courses are offered for high school and middle school students and biomedical sciences courses are offered for highschool students.

In the 2011-12 school year, there are more than 4,200 schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia registered to offer the PLTW courses. In Washington, a total of 125 PLTW programs are being offered in the 2011-12 school year with 30 new programs added in the last year.

Summary of Bill:

Higher Education institutions are required to include Project Lead-the-Way examinations on the list of examinations that may be taken in high school to demonstrate college-level skills and for the purpose of meeting certain lower division general education or postsecondary professional technical education requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 12/9/2011.

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