

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6119

As of January 22, 2012

Title: An act relating to encouraging multiple career pathways through information, exploration, planning, and program coordination.

Brief Description: Enacting the career pathways act.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Eide, Shin, Keiser, Conway, Harper, Frockt and Litzow.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/19/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Stephanie Christensen (786-7405)

Background: The state's comprehensive plan for workforce training entitled High Skills, High Wages 2008 – 2018 identifies four objectives in achieving the goal of ensuring that all youth receive the education, training, and support they need for success in postsecondary education and/or work. One of these objectives is that all students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work. The latest annual progress report from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WFTECB) to the Legislature includes a long term goal that no later than 2018 all high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education, and results in industry certification where applicable. Steps related to achieving this goal include: developing statewide programs of study; fostering an education system that supports multiple pathways; and having graduation requirements that accommodate a career-focused high school education.

Summary of Bill: The goal of increasing the percentage of Washington households living in the middle-income bracket is adopted. Increasing the number of secondary and postsecondary program graduates in the state, especially in fields with high economic demand, is adopted as a strategy for reaching this goal. The state education and workforce agencies, the Department of Commerce, the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council, and the Department of Social and Health Services must incorporate this goal and strategy into their respective strategic plans.

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.

All career exploration materials and communications from the state education and workforce agencies must include information about multiple career pathways across all levels of postsecondary education. All materials and communications from the State Board of Education (SBE) regarding high school graduation requirements must show options and strategies for students to pursue any of the multiple career pathways while meeting graduation requirements, including a nonbaccalaureate pathway.

Analysis from the state education and workforce agencies that compare employment data for high school graduates, two-year degrees, or baccalaureate degrees must also provide employment data for apprenticeships. Information about two-year and baccalaureate degrees shall be separated by academic major or by major academic unit when possible.

SBE and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board must identify and publicize online tools that students and parents can use for career pathway exploration. WFTECB must also create and publicize an annual list of promising careers based on analysis of employment openings and future growth, as well as sustainable wages. The list must include careers that require various levels of postsecondary education, and show the career pathways students may take to pursue the careers. The purpose of the list is to illustrate a sample of high-quality careers available through multiple pathways, and encourage students and parents to engage in career exploration.

WFTECB shall work with statewide business organizations to develop an online mentor program using volunteer mentors employed in various career fields. The mentors will provide advice or answer inquiries from students and parents as they explore multiple career pathways using the online tools. The mentor program must be supported by business organizations or foundations through cash or in-kind contributions.

The Career Exploration Partnership Zone Program (Partnership Zone) is created to increase connections and access to internships, training, and employment opportunities, provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, innovations, and expertise. WFTECB must designate regional coordinators for partnership zones. Coordinators must develop and facilitate internship and employment opportunities for students, seek public and private funding, promote the use of available online tools, and report annually to WFTECB. Partnerships and collaborative activities under a partnership zone are voluntary. Partners are encouraged to use creation of a partnership zone as a way to strengthen competitive grant applications.

The instructional program of basic education provided by each school district must include programs in career and technical education. Postsecondary education includes preapprenticeship, apprenticeship, workforce training programs, community and technical colleges, and baccalaureate and nonbaccalaureate opportunities.

A high school or school district may not prohibit a student from enrolling in a career and technical course equivalency, if available, if the student has not been successful in the equivalent academic course.

The authorized expenditures of the Washington Opportunity Pathways Account are changed to remove the educational opportunity grant program and add the programs supported by the opportunity express account and the opportunity internship program. Changes are also made

to the opportunity internship program, and WFTECB must make recommendations about expanding the program.

WFTECB must develop a proposal to establish an employee benefit account to support continuing education and training for employees, which employers may offer as part of a comprehensive benefits package and that may be funded by the employer, employee, and state contributions.

Each middle school, junior high school, and high school is encouraged to implement a comprehensive guidance program that includes exploration of multiple career pathways and emphasizes intentional and informed postsecondary planning.

Graduation requirements must provide students whose high school and beyond plan does not include immediate entrance into a four-year institution of higher education sufficient opportunity to earn a certificate of academic achievement, complete their program of study, earn the program's certificate or credential if applicable, and complete other state and local graduation requirements. Graduation requirements may not impose additional administrative requirements or procedures for students seeking a nonbaccalaureate career pathway.

School districts are encouraged to have each middle school, junior high school, and high school student develop a high school and beyond plan, which includes specific components related to career exploration and preparation for postsecondary education or training.

All public high schools are encouraged to offer multiple high school programs of study within career pathways for students. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must develop model frameworks for high school programs of study within career pathways. Work-based learning opportunities provided within a high school program of study may include career-related student competitions, internships, school-based enterprises, social enterprises for learning, service learning, simulated workplace experiences, technical mentoring, work experience, and youth apprenticeships or preapprenticeships.

The Professional Educator Standards board must include standards for teacher certification the requisite skills to offer contextualized learning activities for students, including project-based learning and teaching academic content in the context of the world of work.

Institutions of higher education are encouraged to offer comprehensive career counseling to all students, which includes assistance in career pathway identification, labor market demand information for occupations, assistance with barriers to program completion, and information for students who exit a program before completion.

Community and technical colleges must offer integrated basic education and skills training programs for students requiring basic skills and literacy in order to participate in college-level courses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2012.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Not all students choose a career pathway that requires a baccalaureate degree. There are many valuable, high demand jobs that do not require a baccalaureate degree. Students and parents should be informed about multiple career pathways so that students can choose which career pathway is best for them. Giving students the option to choose between multiple pathways will give all students the opportunity to succeed in their postsecondary education and/or career.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Alexander Donohue, Jim Tschimperle, Pacific Machine, Inc., Tacoma Public Schools; John Page, Tacoma Public Schools; Dennis Kampe, Clark County Skills Center; Tim Knue, WA Assn. of Career & Technical Education; Wes Pruitt, WFTECB; Alan Burke, OSPI; Tiffany Merkel, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.