

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1823

As Reported by House Committee On:
Labor & Workforce Development

Title: An act relating to centers of excellence.

Brief Description: Concerning centers of excellence.

Sponsors: Representatives Sells, Tarleton, Seaquist, Maxwell, Smith, Bergquist, Fey and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workforce Development: 2/20/13 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands the role of Centers of Excellence to include acting as central sources of information for businesses in targeted industries and working with K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and apprenticeship programs.
- Expands the list of entities the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges must consult with when designating and funding Centers of Excellence.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Manweller, Ranking Minority Member; Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Green, Holy, Moeller, Ormsby and Short.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

A "Center of Excellence" (Center) is a community or technical college designated by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) as a statewide leader in industry-specific workforce education and training.

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.

The State Board designates Centers and allocates funds to new and existing Centers on a competitive basis. In making its designations, the State Board must consult with business, industry, labor, certain state agencies, and educational institutions. The State Board gives priority to applicants with established programs serving a targeted industry cluster within the region.

The role of the Centers is to employ strategies to create educational efficiencies, build a diverse workforce for strategic industries, and develop innovative curriculum and ways of delivering education and training. The Centers act as brokers of information and resources related to community and technical college education.

Centers work with employers, other colleges, career and technical education programs in regional high schools, skill centers, and labor representatives to develop curriculum and training programs and to promote best practices in education and training to support the targeted industry.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

In designating and allocating funds to Centers of Excellence (Centers), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) must also consult with the Council of Presidents and institutions of higher education, which include state and regional universities.

In addition to the current priority list, priority is given to applicants that have networked effectively with both secondary and baccalaureate institutions on developing a talent pipeline for the targeted industry.

The role of the Centers is expanded to include: (1) being central sources of information on education and training services available to meet the needs of strategic industry sectors and enhance the careers of students in these sectors; and (2) acting as a communication conduit to Washington's education system about industry trends. The Centers must work with K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and apprenticeship programs when acting as brokers of information and resources. In addition to its current goals, the Centers must: (1) engage employer and labor representatives from strategic industries in identifying both industry needs and student needs; (2) identify industry skill standards and industry-based certifications; (3) facilitate the creation of model programs of study that prepare students for careers in strategic industries; and (4) coordinate with industry assistance organizations to connect businesses with needed services.

The Centers must seek federal funds, private gifts, and grants to supplement state resources for the purposes of performing the roles and strategies required.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds language to include providing information regarding student needs, not just industry needs, in the targeted industries.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Centers of Excellence (Centers) can be great sources of information. The state has a great K-12 system and four-year institutions, but they currently are not included in the Centers' process. The Centers help Washington businesses and help bring business into the state. They help to create jobs. A Center represents all colleges, not just itself. The traditional role of Centers requires collaboration with multiple stakeholders, but focuses on the two-year system.

(In support with concerns) The bill expands the roles of the Centers and there will be additional costs in order for the Centers to implement the goals of the bill. One option would be to narrow the bill to focus only on a few Centers rather than all the Centers. Centers that have had great accomplishments are those that have secured supplemental funding and have long-standing staff. However, budget concerns mean directors of some Centers have moved on to other jobs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Sells, prime sponsor; and Bob Guenther, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 77.

(In support with concerns) Jim Crabbe, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Barbara Hins-Turner, Energy Center of Excellence.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.