

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5122

As Passed House:
April 14, 2015

Title: An act relating to precollege placement measures.

Brief Description: Concerning precollege placement measures.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Frockt, Lias, Bailey and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 3/25/15, 3/26/15 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/14/15, 96-1.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Encourages the public baccalaureate institutions to use multiple methods to determine whether a student must enroll in a pre-college course.
- Requires the public baccalaureate institutions to post all available options for course placement on their websites and in their admissions materials.
- Requires the Student Achievement Council to encourage the use of multiple methods to determine if a student must enroll in a pre-college course in setting the minimum college admission standards.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregory, Holy, Reykdal, Sells, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Van Werven.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Hargrove.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

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.

Background:

Pre-college Courses.

A student determined as unprepared for credit-bearing college courses may be placed into a pre-college course. Pre-college courses are developmental or remedial courses that students may need to complete before being able to enroll in college-level courses at the 100 level or above. Pre-college courses do not count towards degree or certificate completion.

Senate Bill 5712.

In 2013 the Legislature passed Senate Bill 5712 which required the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to encourage colleges to use multiple measures to determine whether a student must enroll in a pre-college course. The bill also required the community and technical colleges to post all the available options for course placement on their websites and in their admissions materials.

Smarter Balanced Assessments.

In 2011 Washington adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to be fully implemented in the 2014-15 academic year. The CCSS are core concepts and procedures for English language arts, literacy, and mathematics that are meant to prepare students for college, career, and life. In addition to the CCSS, Washington will participate in Smarter Balanced assessments beginning in the 2014-15 academic year. Smarter Balanced assessments are aligned with the CCSS and include summative and interim assessments. The assessments are designed to show student progression toward college readiness. The public baccalaureate institutions and the community and technical colleges have agreed to use the eleventh grade Smarter Balanced assessment for the graduating classes of 2016 through 2018. Students who score a level 3 or 4 on the assessment in mathematics and English language arts will be exempt from remedial or pre-college coursework without further testing as long as the student meets other college admission standards.

The Student Achievement Council.

The Student Achievement Council (Council) is the state agency tasked with advancing educational opportunities and attainment. The Council has the responsibility to set minimum college admission standards for the public baccalaureate institutions as a part of its goal to improve student transitions and success.

Summary of Bill:

The public baccalaureate institutions may use multiple measures to determine whether a student must enroll in a pre-college course. These measures may be placement tests, the SAT, high school transcripts, college transcripts, or initial class performance. The public baccalaureate institutions must post all the available options for course placement on their websites and in their admissions materials.

The Council is to encourage the use of multiple measures to determine whether a student must enroll in a pre-college course as a part of minimum college admission standards for the public baccalaureate institutions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill mirrors what was passed by the Legislature in 2013 pertaining to the community and technical colleges. For the community and technical colleges, students are given a placement test, and some students do not know they will have to take this test. Students who score low are placed in a remedial course without credit and have to stay there the whole quarter. The bill required the community and technical colleges to provide information to students about alternative ways to determine remedial need, such as looking at grade point averages or high school testing. It was suggested that this could be done for the baccalaureate institutions too, but it might be a little bit different.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.