

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Rep. Phyllis Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair and
Rep. Don Carlson, Republican Co-Chair

BILL ANALYSIS
HB 1693

Brief Description: Creating the Washington's promise scholarship program.

Background:

Currently Washington State provides merit-based scholarships to undergraduate higher education students from state funds. These scholarships include the Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE), and the Washington Scholars Program. Each of these awards are presented to up to three students per legislative district based on vocational merit in the case of the WAVE program, and upon academic merit for Washington Scholars.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Promise Scholarship is established. This merit-based scholarship, implemented by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, is awarded to students based on three eligibility criteria. The award consists of two years' tuition at the community college full-time tuition rate.

Eligibility. *Eligibility is based on the following criteria, all of which must be met in order to receive the scholarship: (1) academic merit; (2) graduation from high school or its equivalent; and (3) student family income limit.*

Academic merit is determined based on the current year. From the graduating class of 1999 through the graduating class of 2002, students whose class rank is within the top 15 percent of each high school graduating class are eligible. Beginning with the 2000-01 academic year, students in the 10th grade who pass the Washington Assessment for Student Learning on the first try are eligible.

The graduation status requirement indicates that students must graduate from high school or its equivalent.

The financial eligibility criterion is met for students whose family income does not exceed 135 percent of the state median family income. For the 1998-99 academic year, 135 percent of family income for a family of four is \$69,000.

Implementation. *The Washington Promise Scholarship is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction provides class rank information and the results of the Washington Assessment for Student Learning results to the HECB.*

For those 10th grade students who pass the Washington Assessment for Student Learning, the HECB establishes an account for each student, and place two years of tuition units equivalent to full-time community college tuition in that account.

There are three differences between the use of these accounts and the current Guaranteed Education Tuition program: (1) the scholarship can only be used to attend Washington State institutions; (2) the scholarship may not be transferred; and (3) the scholarships may not be refunded.

The scholarship may be used for college-related expenses, including but not limited to, tuition, room and board, books, materials, transportation.

*Prepared for the House Higher Education Committee
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