

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 1779

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Creating the GET ready for math and science scholarship program.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Wallace, Dunn, Haigh, Kenney, Hasegawa, B. Sullivan, McDermott, Takko, Roberts, P. Sullivan, Fromhold, Quall, Simpson, Lantz, Hudgins, Kagi, Santos, Ormsby and Morrell).

**House Committee on Higher Education**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Senate Committee on Higher Education**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

### **Background:**

#### Need for Degrees in Math and Science.

The percentage of students majoring in math, science, and engineering has declined over at least the past decade, despite the fact that job opportunities in these fields continue to be strong. The state has recognized the need to increase the number of students majoring in math, science, and engineering. For example, the 2006 Supplemental Operating Budget provided about \$3.7 million for math and science enrollments at the University of Washington and Washington State University. The 2006 budget also included a \$500,000 appropriation to provide additional scholarships for students studying to become teachers in, among other fields, secondary math and science.

As part of the Washington Learns effort, the need for Washington's colleges and universities to produce more graduates in high demand fields, particularly mathematics and science, was acknowledged. The Washington Learns final report concluded that more students need to major in math and science. To provide incentives for students to do so, the Washington Learns report recommended creating scholarships to encourage low- and middle-income students who show an interest in math and science to major in those fields in college.

#### Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) Program.

Washington's Advanced College Tuition Payment Program -- known as the GET Program -- was created in 1998 as Washington's prepaid college tuition program. The GET Program allows purchasers to buy tuition units at current prices for use at a later date. These funds are invested by the State Investment Board and the purchaser is guaranteed that one year's worth of units purchased now will be worth one year's worth of public university tuition in the future.

### **Summary:**

The GET Ready for Math and Science Scholarship Program (Scholarship Program) is created. The Scholarship Program will provide college scholarships for students who:

- (1) score a "4" ("Advanced") on the 10th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in either math or science or achieve a score in the 95th percentile or higher on the math SAT or ACT;
- (2) have a family income no greater than 125 percent of the median family income in Washington at the time they apply for the scholarship and for up to the two previous years;
- (3) agree to major in a math, science, or related field; and
- (4) make a commitment to work for at least three years in Washington in a math, science, or related field.

The scholarships may be used at any accredited public or private college or university in Washington. However, the maximum annual scholarship amount may not exceed the annual cost of undergraduate tuition and fees at the University of Washington. Scholarships will be awarded to the extent that state and private matching funds are available.

The Scholarship Program will be administered by a private non-profit organization. The non-profit organization and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) will establish criteria for selecting eligible applicants who, without scholarship assistance, would be least likely to pursue a qualified undergraduate program at an institution of higher education in Washington. They must also determine criteria for the undergraduate programs and majors offered in Washington in math, science, or a related field that qualify a student for a scholarship. The HECB will post the criteria for qualified courses and list these programs and majors on its website.

If a student receives a scholarship and then (1) does not graduate from college, (2) switches to a major not in a math, science, or related field, or (3) does not work in a math, science or related field in Washington for at least three years after graduation, the student will be required to pay back some or all of the scholarship funds received.

The HECB will buy tuition units from the state's GET Program to be used for the GET Ready for Math and Science scholarships.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	76	22	
Senate	47	1	(Senate amended)
House	72	21	(House concurred)

**Effective:** July 22, 2007