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## Higher Education Committee

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### HB 2483

**Brief Description:** Creating the office of the student achievement council.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Seaquist, Haler, Zeiger and Kelley; by request of Governor Gregoire.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Office of the Student Achievement Council (the Office).
- Creates the Student Achievement Council with the purpose of providing advice to the Office.
- Sets out the mission and duties for the Office, with the purpose of improving educational attainment in Washington.
- Requires the Office to collaborate with education and higher education agencies and boards, and higher education institutions.
- Requires the Office to recommend statutes for elimination or transfer with a focus on increasing educational attainment.
- Establishes a Joint Select Legislative Committee on Student Achievement to review the work of the Office of the Student Achievement Council and make policy and budget recommendations on improving educational attainment.

**Hearing Date:** 1/19/12

**Staff:** Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

#### **Background:**

The Legislature established a state agency, the Council on Higher Education, to review and recommend higher education policy in 1969. In 1975 this agency became the Council for Postsecondary Education following federal legislation that required states to establish or designate a single state postsecondary education planning agency to qualify for federal planning and other funds. The state agency that currently conducts planning for the higher education

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system, reports on performance, administers state and federal financial aid programs, and approves private institutions to operate in the state is the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) which was established in 1985.

Legislation enacted in 2011, abolishes the HECB effective July 1, 2012 and replaces it with a Higher Education Council. Under this legislation, a number of HECB functions are eliminated effective July 1, 2012. Functions eliminated include developing a statewide strategic master plan for higher education, and reporting on state support received by students, the costs of higher education, gender equity, costs and benefits of tuition and fee reciprocity with Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia, and transmitting undergraduate and graduate educational costs to boards of regents. The financial aid office under the administration of the HECB becomes a separate state agency, the Office of Student Financial Assistance, effective July 1, 2012. The 2011 legislation also created a temporary Higher Education Steering Committee to recommend the duties and members of the new Higher Education Council by December 1, 2011.

The Higher Education Steering Committee, chaired by the Governor and comprised of legislators and representation from education and higher education sectors in the state, met four times in 2011 to determine the new duties of a state higher education agency. The recommendations included two different options for an executive branch office and an advisory council, and set out duties for the new Office.

### **Summary of Bill:**

#### **The Office of the Student Achievement Council**

The Office of the Student Achievement Council (the Office) is created. The Executive Director is appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate, and may employ his or her own staff.

#### **The Student Achievement Council**

The Student Achievement Council (Council) is created with the purpose of providing advice to the Office and emphasizing the goal of increasing educational attainment. The Council is comprised of nine voting members and two non-voting members as follows:

- Five citizen members appointed by the governor with the consent of the Senate. These members shall serve for four-year terms with the initial members' terms staggered;
- A representative of the four-year public baccalaureate institutions selected by the presidents of the institutions;
- A representative of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges;
- A representative of the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- A representative of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board;
- A non-voting member to be selected by an association of schools; and
- A non-voting member selected from among independent degree-granting institutions.

The Chair must be selected by the Council from among the citizen members, and serve for a one-year term but may serve longer if selected to do so by the Council members. The Council is required to create advisory committees on an ad hoc basis for the purpose of informing research and policy, and for obtaining input from students, faculty, and higher education experts and practitioners, citizens, business and industry, and labor. Council members may be compensated

for travel expenses and other expenses in accordance with statute pertaining to class three part-time board and council members.

### **The Joint Select Legislative Committee on Student Achievement**

A Joint Select Legislative Committee on Student Achievement (Committee) is established to review the Office's work and make policy and budget recommendations on improving educational attainment in Washington. The Committee must be comprised of eight legislators with four members from each party in the Senate and the House who serve on education, higher education, workforce development, or appropriations committees. The members must be appointed and reappointed before the close of each regular legislative session during odd-numbered years. A chair and vice chair, from opposite parties, must be chosen by the Committee. The Committee must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature each year by December 1.

### **Purpose and Mission of the Office**

The purpose and mission of the Office is to set goals for increasing the educational attainment in Washington and to monitor progress toward meeting those goals. The Office is required to link the work of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the public baccalaureate institutions, and the independent schools and colleges.

The Office is required to consult with the public baccalaureate institutions and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to recommend statutes formerly assigned to the Higher Education Coordinating Board that should be transferred, or eliminated with the purpose of keeping a clear focus for the Office on educational attainment.

### **Goal Setting**

The Office is required to set short-term and long-term educational attainment goals, including certificates and degrees that meet workforce needs. The goals must be integrated, measurable goals for each sector's contribution to the overarching goal of increasing educational attainment. At the same time, each agency and institution must continue to have individual goals and strategic plans. In addition, the Office is required to identify the resources necessary to meet the goals and recognize current state economic conditions and resources. The goals must be reviewed and revised every two years with the first revision due by December 1, 2013.

### **Strategic Planning**

In order to meet goals for increasing educational attainment, the Office must conduct strategic planning with collaboration of agencies, stakeholders and the Legislature. The plan must be updated every two years with the initial plan due by December 1, 2014. The Office must conduct system reviews as needed. In addition, the Office must review statutes and rules and recommend eliminating those that are overly burdensome or duplicative for education providers. Initial recommendations must be made to the Legislature and the Governor by October 1, 2012, and final recommendations by September 1, 2013.

### **Innovation, Research, and Data**

The Office is required to facilitate the development and expansion of innovative practices with, between, and among the sectors to increase educational attainment, including accountability

measures to determine the effectiveness of the innovations. The Office must review the data and analysis produced by the Education Research and Data Center at the Office of Financial Management in developing policy recommendations and setting goals. In conducting research and analysis, the office must at a minimum:

- Identify barriers to increasing educational attainment, evaluative effectiveness of the various educational models, identify best practices, and recommend methods to overcome barriers;
- Analyze data from multiple sources including data from academic research and from areas and agencies outside of education including but not limited to data from the Department of Health, the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Social and Health Services, to determine best practices to remove barriers to improving educational attainment;
- Assess educational achievement disaggregated by income level, age, gender, race and ethnicity, country of origin, and other relevant demographic groups working with the Education Research and Data Center;
- Track progress toward meeting the state's goals;
- Communicate results and provide access to data analysis to policymakers, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, institutions of higher education, students, and the public.

### **Transitions**

Regarding transitions from secondary to postsecondary education, the Office must set minimum college admission standards for four-year institutions of higher education. The Office must develop programs to encourage students to prepare and pursue postsecondary college and career programs.

The Office is charged with recommending policies that require coordination between or among sectors from high school to postsecondary education including community and technical colleges, four-year institutions of higher education, apprenticeships, training, or workplace education; between two-year and four-year institutions of higher education; and from postsecondary education to career.

**Administering Student Financial Aid:** The Office of Student Financial Assistance is in the Office. The Office must administer student financial aid programs including the State Need Grant, the College Bound Scholarship, the Guaranteed Education Tuition payment, and work study programs. The Office must administer state and federal grants and programs including programs that provide incentives for improvement related to increasing access and success in postsecondary education.

### **Protect Consumers**

Consumer protection duties of the Office include approving private, degree-granting institutions, approving programs that are eligible programs for students to use federal benefits such as veterans' benefits and implement statutory residency requirements through adopting rules.

### **Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee**

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) must conduct a review of the Office and its functions. The JLARC and the Office must collaborate to identify performance

measures and goals to evaluate the Council. The JLARC must present its findings to the Legislature by December 1, 2019.

**Other**

Statutes relating to budget priorities and levels of funding, development of methods and protocols for measuring educational costs, and the creation of the Higher Education Council are repealed. Definitions are adjusted to create consistency with new titles for the Office, the Council, and the Office of Student Financial Assistance that is within the Office. A section from 2011 legislation is amended to create consistency with the purpose of this Act.

Emergency clauses are added for the establishment of the Office and the Council to take effect on June 1, 2012, and for the section that amends effective dates from 2011 legislation to take effect immediately.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 16, 2012.

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