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## Higher Education Committee

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### E2SSB 6232

**Brief Description:** Regarding higher education coordination.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Kilmer, Shin, McAuliffe and Eide; by request of Governor Gregoire).

#### Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Creates the Student Achievement Council (Council) with the mission of setting goals for increasing educational attainment, monitoring progress, and linking the work of state agencies and educational providers.
- Directs that the Council be comprised of nine voting members, and outlines Council duties including strategic planning, improving student transitions, consumer protection, and accountability.
- Creates a Joint Higher Education Committee of eight legislators to review the work of the Council.
- Requires the Council to develop a 10-year statewide plan with the first plan due by October 1, 2014 and updated every two years.
- Requires the Council to make budget recommendations for allocations for major policy changes, and prioritize funding needs to align with the 10-year statewide plan.
- Amends statutory references to reflect the Council's duties and transfers or eliminates Higher Education Coordinating Board duties.
- Specifies higher education data collection and analysis duties for the Education Research and Data Center at the Office of Financial Management including annual cost study reports beginning December 1, 2012.

**Hearing Date:** 2/15/12

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

**Background:**

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*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.*

In 1969 the Legislature established a state agency, the Council on Higher Education, to review and recommend higher education policy. 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 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; 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 Higher Education Council.

### **Summary of Bill:**

#### The Student Achievement Council (Council).

The Council is created and the purpose and mission of the Council is to set goals for increasing the educational attainment in Washington and to monitor progress toward meeting those goals. The Council must connect the work of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the State Board of Education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB), and the four-year institutions of higher education, as well as the independent schools and colleges. The Council is composed of nine voting members. The voting members include:

- four citizen members, appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate;
- one representative from the four-year institutions, selected by the institutions' presidents;
- one representative from the SBCTC, selected by the SBCTC;
- one representative of an independent, nonprofit institution, appointed by an association of independent nonprofit colleges and universities;
- the SPI, or SPI's designee; and
- one student, appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate.

The representative from the independent, nonprofit institutions and the SPI must excuse themselves from voting on matters relating primarily to public institutions of higher education. The citizens must serve staggered four-year terms. The chair must be selected by the Council from among the citizen members. The chair must serve one year, but may serve longer if

selected to do so by the membership. Vacancies on the Council must be filled in the same manner as original appointments. The Council must create advisory committees on an ad hoc basis to: (1) obtain input from students, faculty, higher education experts and practitioners, citizens, business and industry, and labor; and (2) inform their research, policy, and programmatic functions.

The Council has the following duties:

- set short- and long-term educational attainment goals, collaborate with all sectors to develop integrated measurable goals, and identify resources to meet goals;
- the Council must review and revise the goals every two years, with the first review due to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2013;
- provide strategic planning and develop a ten-year statewide plan for higher education;
- provide financing, planning, and strategic investment recommendations for higher education, including comparing total per-student funding in Washington with institutions in global challenge states, and system-wide budget recommendations;
- make system design and coordination recommendations to address future needs of higher education, including transfer policies, program approval, and approving private, degree-granting postsecondary institutions;
- improve student transitions, which includes setting minimum college admission standards for four-year institutions; developing programs to help students prepare for postsecondary college and career programs; recommending coordinating policies; and identifying transition issues and solutions;
- facilitate the development and expansion of innovative practices to increase educational attainment;
- use data and analysis produced by the Education Research and Data Center, which includes identifying barriers and recommendations to overcome such barriers, evaluating effectiveness of educational models, identifying best practices, analyzing data from multiple sources, tracking progress toward goals, and communicating results;
- oversee the Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office), which administers student financial aid programs, including the State Need Grant, College Bound scholarship, the GET program, and Work Study;
- arbitrate disputes between and among four-year institutions of higher education and community colleges;
- coordinate with the governing boards of the two- and four-year institutions, the SBCTC, the WTECB, and SPI to create a seamless system of public education;
- protect consumers, which includes approving private, degree-granting postsecondary institutions and veterans' benefits programs; and
- represent public interests above those of the institutions.

The Council must employ an executive director. The executive director must be appointed by the Governor from a list of three names submitted by the Council. The Governor may request an additional list of names. The Council has the authority to adopt rules as necessary.

#### *Ten-Year Statewide Plan.*

The Council must identify measurable and feasible goals and priorities for Washington's system of higher education in a 10-year period of time and a plan to achieve them. The Council must identify strategies for expanding access, affordability, quality, efficiency, and accountability among institutions. By October 1, 2014, and every two years thereafter, the Council must submit

an update of the ten-year statewide plan to the Joint Higher Education Committee (Committee). The plan must reflect the expectations and policy directions of the Legislature and provide a timely and relevant framework for the development of future budgets and policy proposals. The plan must include strategic planning, financing planning and strategic investment, system design and coordination, student transition improvement, and data analysis.

#### *Budgeting.*

The Legislature intends for the Council to make budget recommendations for allocations for major policy changes, but not for the Council to review and make recommendations on individual institutional budgets. The Council should prioritize funding needs for the overall system of higher education in accordance with priorities set forth in the ten-year statewide plan. The Council's recommendations should take into consideration the total per-student funding at similar public institutions of higher education in the global challenge states.

Several additional duties, including developing a needs assessment process, adopting statewide transfer and articulation policies, and administering any federal act, are moved from chapter 28B.76 RCW (HECB) and recodified in chapter 28B.77 RCW.

#### Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office).

The Office is created within the Council. The Office must employ a deputy director who will serve at the pleasure of the executive director of the Council.

#### The Joint Higher Education Committee (Committee).

A Committee is created. The purpose of the Committee is to review the work of the Council and provide legislative feedback by December 1, 2012; engage with the Council and higher education community to create greater communication, coordination, and alignment between the system and expectations of the Legislature; and provide recommendations for higher education policy, including proposed legislation. The Committee must consist of eight members: four members must be from the House of Representatives—two from each caucus—and four must be from the Senate—two from each caucus. At least one member from each caucus must be from the Ways & Means Committee, and at least one member from the Higher Education policy committee. Committee members must recommend to their respective caucuses nominees for possible appointment and reappointment to the Council.

#### Education Research and Data Center (ERDC).

In consultation with the four-year institutions, the ERDC must annually develop information on the approximate amount of state support that students receive. In consultation with the ERDC, institutions, and state education agencies, the Council must identify data needed to carry out its responsibilities, which includes comparing Washington to the rest of the nation. Assistance to state policymakers and institutions in making policy decisions includes, but is not limited to, regular completion of educational cost study reports and information on state support; annual reporting of a national comparison of tuition and fees; and per-student funding at similar institutions in the global challenge states. The ERDC must develop standardized methods and protocols for measuring the undergraduate and graduate educational costs for higher education institutions. The ERDC must provide annual cost study reports beginning December 1, 2012. The ERDC must determine and report on educational costs to the governing boards of the higher education institutions.

References to the Council for Higher Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, and Others.

Statutory references to HECB are amended to reflect the Council's duties or deleted throughout the Code. Statutes amended include those that reference the Council's duty to recognize by rule accrediting associations that institutions may be accredited by. The HECB's duty to authorize degree-granting institutions is removed. Technical corrections are made to change references to the Higher Education Coordinating Board to the Office of Financial Assistance for statutes relevant to financial aid, and this office is under the supervision of the Council.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for an emergency clause for section 105 relating to membership of the Student Achievement Council and Section 901 repealing HECB statutes, which takes effect immediately.