

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2626

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 27, 2014

Title: An act relating to establishing statewide educational attainment goals.

Brief Description: Concerning statewide educational attainment goals.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Seaquist, Haler, Reykdal, Gregerson, Pollet and Moscoso).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/14/14, 87-10.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/27/14 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chair; Becker, Vice Chair; Kohl-Welles, Ranking Member; Baumgartner, Frockt, McAuliffe and Tom.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: In 2012 the Legislature created the nine-member Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). WSAC's mission is to (1) propose goals for increasing the educational attainment in Washington, recommend resources to achieve the goals, and monitor progress toward meeting those goals; (2) propose improvements and innovations needed for educational attainment; and (3) advocate for higher education.

Specific WSAC duties are outlined in the legislation and include developing a strategic action plan every two years, starting December 1, 2012, and a ten-year roadmap that identifies WSAC's strategies for meeting goals and priorities.

In December 2013, WSAC released The 2013 Roadmap: A Plan to Increase Educational Attainment in Washington. In the Roadmap, WSAC sets two overarching goals to increase educational attainment in Washington by 2023:

- All adults, ages 25 to 44, in Washington will have a high school diploma or equivalent; and
- At least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25 to 44, will have a postsecondary credential.

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.

WSAC states that the goals for 2023 can be accomplished through 12 action steps supporting the following three objectives: ensure access; enhance learning, and prepare for the future.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): The Legislature finds that:

- increasing educational attainment is vital to the wellbeing of Washingtonians and critical to the health of the state's economy;
- education opens doors to gainful employment, higher wages, increased job benefits, improved physical health, and increased civic engagement;
- educated workers who are capable of competing for high-demand jobs in today's global economy sustain existing employers and attract new businesses;
- individuals with competitive higher education credentials directly contribute to the state's economic growth and vitality;
- workforce and labor market projections estimate that by 2020 the vast majority of jobs in Washington will require at least a high school diploma or equivalent and 70 percent of those jobs will also require some postsecondary education; and
- current levels of educational attainment are inadequate to address the educational needs of the state.

The Legislature recognizes that one of the most important duties of WSAC is to propose educational attainment goals to the Governor and the Legislature and develop a ten-year roadmap to achieve those goals, to be updated every two years.

Acknowledging the recommendations in the higher education ten-year Roadmap, the Legislature is encouraged by WSAC's efforts to meet the following two educational attainment goals in order to meet the societal and economic needs of the future:

- All adults in Washington ages 25 to 44 will have a high school diploma or equivalent by 2023; and
- At least 70 percent of Washington adults ages 25 to 44 will have a postsecondary credential by 2023.

The Act expires July 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Three years ago when creating WSAC, a requirement for a ten-year roadmap was placed in the bill so we are not doing short-term budgeting. The first roadmap was released this year. The two goals are important to address because business needs the rapid expansion of higher education programs. The proposed

striking amendment gives the latitude and momentum WSAC needs. These goals have statewide value. We are looking for planning targets for postsecondary education.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Seaquist, prime sponsor; Gene Sharratt, WSAC.