

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5789

As of January 18, 2022

Title: An act relating to creating the Washington career and college pathways innovation challenge program.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington career and college pathways innovation challenge program.

Sponsors: Senators Randall, Nobles, Conway, Das, Frockt, Kuderer, Lias, Nguyen and Wilson, C.; by request of Student Achievement Council.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/18/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Washington Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Program (program) to award grants to local and regional entities for programs with the objective of meeting state educational attainment goals.
- Directs the Student Achievement Council (Council) to administer the program based on a competitive grant process.
- Permits the Council to solicit and receive gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources in support of the program.
- Repeals the Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background: Higher Education Attainment Goal. The Student Achievement Council (Council) provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and administers programs to support students and higher education in the state. The Council is statutorily required to propose educational attainment goals and priorities to meet the state's higher education needs. In 2013, the Council established the following two educational attainment goals for 2023 that the Legislature adopted in 2014:

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

Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality. The Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality in Higher Education Program is administered by the Council and College Board to award incentive grants to public institutions of higher education, or consortia of institutions to encourage cooperative programs designed to address specific system problems. Strong priority will be given to proposals that involve more than one sector of education and to proposals that show substantive institutional commitment.

Summary of Bill: The Washington Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Program (program) is created and will be administered by the Council. The purpose of the program is to meet statewide attainment goals through the use of local and regional partnerships.

The program must be administered using a competitive grant process and must consider, among other things initiatives that:

- raise educational attainment and reach new populations;
- engage community-based organizations;
- expand the use of integrated work-based learning models and career connected learning; or
- include local funds.

The Council must hire staff to support grant oversight and provide technical assistance to grantees. The Council must provide a report to the Legislature annually regarding the grants that were awarded and progress of each project.

The Washington Career and College Pathways Innovation account is established in the custody of the state treasurer. The council may accept public and private gifts, grants, and endowments for the program.

The Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2022.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We have spent many years focusing on reaching the postsecondary attainment goal. The pathways folks take are circuitous for many reasons. It can be difficult for first generation students, low income students, and students from communities of color to access higher education. This bill recognizes that some of the incredible community based organizations have some of the best tools to help these students. The goals of this program align perfectly with the goals of closing the educational opportunity and equity gaps. This bill encourages partnerships with entities whose primary goals are the health and success of Washingtonians and we are proud to be a part of that network. This bill would be a huge boon for the work that we are doing to connect individuals with postsecondary opportunity. The use of trusted messengers who are embedded in communities can be a real asset in reaching people we have had trouble connecting with. This legislation has the potential to address the information gap about financial aid among residents. We are confident this is the right strategy offering innovation that can be scaled statewide. The local matching requirement will make the program hard to implement and be overly burdensome. This will provide the means to reinforce existing efforts and create new innovations. We continue to hear that more resources are necessary to build relationships between communities and higher education. This will deliver change by catering to local needs and allowing us to scale up the most effective strategies. Regional partners can close the information, technical, and support gaps for future students.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Emily Randall, Prime Sponsor; Ruben Flores, Council of Presidents; Alex Hur, NW Education Access; Ryan Davis, Seattle Jobs Initiative; Evans Kaame, Communities for Our Colleges Coalition and Washington Student Association; Kate Harvey, Communities for Our Colleges Coalition; Bill Lyne, United Faculty of Washington State; Dr. Tafona Ervin, Foundation for Tacoma Students; Alyson Rotter, Kitsap Strong/Graduate Strong; Yokiko Hayashi-Saguil, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Alexis Hanson, Associated Students of the University of Washington Bothell; Amy Anderson, Association of Washington Business; Ariane Schmidt, Innovia Fountain; Rathi Sudhakara, WSAC-Washington Student Achievement Council; Shea Hamilton, Independent Colleges of Washington; Mason Green, Washington Student Association; Neil Strege, Washington Roundtable; Maud Daudon, Career Connect Washington; Juliet Schindler, College Success Foundation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.