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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1468**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2021 Regular Session**

**By** House College & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Slatter, Ortiz-Self, Ryu, Leavitt, Simmons, Senn, J. Johnson, Berry, Valdez, Santos, Boehnke, Berg, Peterson, Goodman, Fey, Ormsby, Ramel, Pollet, Davis, Thai, Bronoske, Chopp, Hackney, and Riccelli)

READ FIRST TIME 02/15/21.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing student access to mental health  
2 counseling and services at community and technical colleges; adding a  
3 new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW; creating a new section; and  
4 providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there continues  
7 to be a lack of access to behavioral health counseling and services  
8 for students on college campuses. The task force on community and  
9 technical college counselors found that there is variance throughout  
10 the community and technical college system in counseling models  
11 adopted, access to counselors, and general mental health resources  
12 available. The legislature intends to increase access to mental  
13 health counseling and services for students by establishing a pilot  
14 program to issue grants to community and technical colleges to  
15 implement strategies identified by the community and technical  
16 college counselors task force report.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50  
18 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
2 specific purpose, the college board shall administer a pilot program  
3 to increase student access to mental health counseling and services.

4 (2) The college board, in collaboration with the selection  
5 committee, shall select eight community or technical colleges to  
6 participate in the pilot program, with half of the participating  
7 colleges located outside of the Puget Sound area. The Puget Sound  
8 area consists of Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Thurston counties. Each  
9 participating college must receive a grant to implement one or more  
10 strategies to increase student access to mental health counseling and  
11 services, including substance use disorder counseling and services.

12 (3) (a) A selection committee consisting of the following shall  
13 assist with the application selection process:

14 (i) One community or technical college president;

15 (ii) One community or technical college vice president for  
16 student services or student instruction;

17 (iii) Two faculty counselors employed at a community or technical  
18 college; and

19 (iv) One community or technical college student.

20 (b) The selection committee may consult with representatives of  
21 an entity within the University of Washington school of social work  
22 that has expertise in suicide prevention and the department of health  
23 in developing selection criteria.

24 (4) Community and technical colleges wishing to participate in  
25 the pilot program shall apply to the college board. Applicants must  
26 identify opportunities for expanding on-campus mental health  
27 counseling and services. Applicants must also show a commitment to  
28 further develop partnerships by engaging with external community  
29 providers, including those who provide crisis services and substance  
30 use disorder treatment and counseling. Applications that demonstrate  
31 plans to include one or more of the following strategies recommended  
32 by the community and technical college counselors task force must be  
33 prioritized:

34 (a) Improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in counseling  
35 services, such as by diversifying the counselor workforce by adopting  
36 equity-centered recruiting, training, and retention practices or by  
37 providing equity training and awareness for all counselors;

38 (b) Meet mental health needs of students through an all-campus  
39 effort;

1 (c) Engage students to help increase mental health and counseling  
2 awareness and promote help-seeking behavior through student groups  
3 and other methods;

4 (d) Increase the visibility of counseling services on campus;

5 (e) Increase or expand external partnerships with community  
6 service providers;

7 (f) Adopt the use of telebehavioral health, especially in under  
8 resourced communities;

9 (g) Develop an assessment of counseling services to inform  
10 improvements and ensure counseling services are meeting student  
11 needs; or

12 (h) Implement counseling approaches grounded in theory that have  
13 evidence of being effective.

14 (5) Colleges selected to participate in the pilot program that  
15 use grant funding to hire additional mental health counselors must  
16 hire counselors who have specific graduate-level training for meeting  
17 the mental and behavioral health needs of students.

18 (6) Colleges selected to participate in the pilot program shall  
19 submit a joint report to the appropriate committees of the  
20 legislature and in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 by November 1, 2023.  
21 The report must include:

22 (a) Information on which colleges were selected for the pilot  
23 program, how much grant funding was received per college, and what  
24 strategies each implemented to increase student access to mental  
25 health counseling and services;

26 (b) Demographic data of students accessing mental health  
27 counseling and services, including those students who are considered  
28 underrepresented or traditionally have limited access to mental  
29 health counseling and services;

30 (c) Whether the mental health counseling and services provided  
31 are meeting the demand of students in terms of type and availability,  
32 and whether the various types of mental health counseling and  
33 services are being provided by community providers versus on-campus  
34 services;

35 (d) Information and data on the effectiveness, including cost-  
36 effectiveness, of each strategy used to increase student access to  
37 mental health counseling and services, including substance use  
38 disorder counseling and services, such as the number of additional  
39 students served, reduced wait times for counseling appointments, or  
40 other data that reflects expanded access; and

1           (e) Lessons learned and recommendations for improving student  
2 access to mental health counseling and services at community and  
3 technical colleges and with community providers, including whether  
4 there were any strategies implemented that proved more effective than  
5 others in increasing access.

6           (7) The pilot program expires July 1, 2025.

7           (8) This section expires January 1, 2026.

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