

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESB 5534

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Postsecondary Education & Workforce

**Title:** An act relating to workforce education investment accountability and oversight board staffing changes.

**Brief Description:** Concerning workforce education investment accountability and oversight board staffing changes.

**Sponsors:** Senators Randall, Holy, Nobles and Wellman.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Postsecondary Education & Workforce: 3/21/23, 3/24/23 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill**

- Changes the staffing of the Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight (WEIAO) Board to the Washington Student Achievement Council.
- Permits the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to maintain the WEIAO Board data dashboard.
- Increases membership on the WEIAO Board to include a representative of the Workforce Board.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Waters, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hansen, Jacobsen, Klicker, Leavitt, McEntire, Paul, Pollet, Schmidt and Timmons.

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Staff:** Saranda Ross (786-7068)

**Background:**

The Legislature passed Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2158 in 2019, known as the Workforce Education Investment Act (WEIA). The WEIA established the Workforce Education Investment Account that is funded from an increase in the business and occupation tax. The Workforce Education Investment Account is solely for funding higher education expenses. As a part of the WEIA, the Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight (WEIAO) Board was established for two purposes:

- to provide guidance and recommendations to the Legislature on what workforce education priorities should be funded from the Workforce Education Investment Account; and
- to ensure accountability that the investments funded from the Workforce Education Investment Account are producing the intended results and effectively increasing student success and career readiness.

The WEIAO Board has 17 members, including legislators; representatives from businesses impacted by the tax, higher education, and labor; and students. The WEIAO Board is staffed by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) and is required to meet four times a year.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The Washington Student Achievement Council is tasked with staffing the WEIAO Board. The Workforce Board must maintain the WEIAO Board's data dashboard on a public-facing portal. Membership on the WEIAO Board is increased by one to include a representative of the Workforce Board.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill is built on a strong foundation. For many years, students had to make tough decisions based on their finances, such as whether they could attend a Washington institution of higher education, an out-of-state institution, or not attend college at all. But in

2019 the Legislature passed the strongest financial aid policy in the country—the Washington College Grant (WCG). The WEIAO Board ensures students can take advantage of the WCG without a waitlist. The WEIAO Board has adopted four guiding principles and seven performance accountability metrics to guide investments and demonstrate effectiveness. Through this process, Washington learned that staffing is better in the hands of the Washington Student Achievement Council. This bill ensures the right people are administering the oversight of the WEIAO Board, clarifies the role of the Workforce Board, and helps the WEIAO Board fulfill its obligations to taxpayers. The bill provides needed additional staff-level support so the WEIAO Board can provide the Legislature the necessary information, insights, and guidance to ensure that this groundbreaking investment drives desired outcomes.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Emily Randall, prime sponsor; Bill Lyne, United Faculty of Washington State; and Jane Broom Davidson, Microsoft and Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight Board.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.