
HOUSE BILL 2041

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Hansen and Pollet

Read first time 02/09/15. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to the creation of a pilot project on
2 performance-based scholarships in the state need grant; adding a new
3 section to chapter 28B.92 RCW; creating a new section; and providing
4 an expiration date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that the
7 high cost of attending an institution of higher education is often a
8 barrier for low-income students. Traditional financial aid helps
9 cover tuition and fees, but students have additional costs. These
10 additional costs such as living expenses, transportation, and child
11 care, may cause students to devote more time to work, which can
12 interfere with academic performance.

13 (2) The legislature finds that institutions of higher education
14 in other states are participating in innovative pilot projects for
15 performance-based scholarships. The early findings of these small
16 pilot projects are promising and indicate that performance-based
17 scholarships may help improve student academic performance. The
18 legislature finds this research compelling and intends to pursue
19 additional research by conducting a small pilot project on
20 performance-based scholarships within the state need grant.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.92
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) The state need grant performance-based scholarship pilot
4 project is created. The pilot project has two purposes:

5 (a) To determine whether additional financial aid improves
6 student academic performance and completion rates without performance
7 benchmarks; or

8 (b) To determine if performance benchmarks need to be attached to
9 additional financial aid in order to increase academic performance.

10 (2) The council shall, in consultation with the state board for
11 community and technical colleges, administer the state need grant
12 performance-based scholarship pilot project and shall select two
13 institutions of higher education, one public baccalaureate
14 institution and one community or technical college, to participate in
15 the pilot project.

16 (3)(a) The council shall establish the pilot project as a
17 randomized controlled trial in which two cohorts from students who
18 receive the state need grant at the beginning of the 2016 academic
19 year for each of the participating institutions are randomly
20 selected. The cohorts must consist of a sufficient number of students
21 to produce a statistically valid response. The council may contract
22 with a third-party consultant in creating the pilot project.

23 (b) One cohort of students at each of the participating
24 institutions shall receive the performance-based scholarship without
25 performance measures attached. These shall be the control cohorts.
26 Students in the control cohorts shall receive the scholarship money,
27 in addition to the state need grant and any other financial aid they
28 receive, as long as the students continue to receive the state need
29 grant.

30 (c) The second cohort of students at each of the participating
31 institutions shall receive the performance-based scholarship with
32 performance measures attached. These shall be the performance
33 cohorts. Students in the performance cohorts shall receive the
34 scholarship money, in addition to the state need grant and any other
35 financial aid they receive, as long as the students continue to
36 receive the state need grant and achieve the following additional
37 performance standards:

38 (i) A minimum grade point average of 3.0, or other grade point
39 average the council deems appropriate as long as the grade point
40 average is higher than 2.0.

1 (ii) Successfully complete a minimum of fifteen credits or
2 equivalent clock hours for each quarter or semester the student is
3 receiving the state need grant, or other minimum credit standard that
4 the council deems appropriate.

5 (4) The council shall distribute the scholarship money at the
6 beginning of each quarter or semester that the student is receiving
7 the state need grant, or at such other time as the council deems
8 appropriate. The scholarship money shall be awarded directly to the
9 student to use as the student chooses. The amount of each scholarship
10 shall be determined by the level of appropriation received for this
11 purpose and the number of students selected for the pilot project.

12 (5) The pilot project shall begin at the start of the 2016-17
13 academic year and end at the close of the 2017-18 academic year.

14 (6) The council shall contract with a third-party entity to
15 conduct a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation of the state need
16 grant performance-based scholarship pilot project. The third-party
17 evaluator and the council shall submit a report to the appropriate
18 committees of the legislature that details the findings of the
19 evaluation by November 1, 2018. The evaluation must provide a
20 comparison between the control and performance cohorts and students
21 who did not receive the performance-based scholarship.

22 (7) This section expires August 1, 2019.

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