

**RCW 28B.77.001 Findings—Intent—2012 c 229.** The legislature recognizes that increasing educational attainment is critical to the social and economic well-being of Washington. It is the intent of the legislature to create the student achievement council to provide the focus and propose the goals for increasing educational attainment including improving student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education and training and between and among postsecondary institutions.

The legislature finds that increasing educational attainment is essential for maintaining the health of a democratic society and the competitiveness of the state in the global economy. By increasing educational attainment, students will develop into citizens who are more capable of critical thinking, more aware of their world and its diversity, more creative in their problem-solving, and more successful in addressing social and economic challenges of the future in an informed and thoughtful way.

The legislature finds that educational attainment is a powerful predictor of well-being. Students who have completed higher levels of education or training are more likely to achieve success in work or life and less likely to require taxpayer support. Education is perhaps the most important engine of economic growth and individual and financial health. Success in growing a stronger economy and democracy and lifting incomes and well-being depends upon increasing educational attainment.

The legislature recognizes that reaching the overall objective of increased educational attainment means that Washington's education systems must enable many more students to gain meaningful high school diplomas, postsecondary certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and graduate degrees.

The legislature recognizes that the requirement for academic attainment is increasing. According to various academic studies, Washington's economy is becoming even more highly dependent on workers with postsecondary education. Other studies indicate that rates of successful participation in higher education by Washington residents, especially among lower-income and disadvantaged persons, are among the lowest in the nation.

Due to the large and growing gap between education requirements and achievement, it is the intent of the legislature to focus on increased educational attainment as a key priority and to closely track progress towards meeting this statewide objective. [2012 c 229 s 1.]