

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5931

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 21, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to creating the nurse educator incentive grant program.

**Brief Description:** Creating the nurse educator incentive grant program.

**Sponsors:** Senator Becker.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/19/19, 2/21/19 [DP-WM].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Establishes the Nurse Educator Incentive Grant Program at the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.
- Caps the maximum benefit amount at the equivalent cost of tuition and fees at an approved doctorate of nursing program.
- Requires employment as a nurse educator at a state community or technical college to receive the incentive.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Palumbo, Chair; Randall, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Brown, Ericksen, Liias and Wellman.

**Staff:** Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

**Background:** Nurse educators teach within nursing programs at all of the state's community and technical colleges. Nationwide, there is a nursing faculty shortage. Budget constraints, an aging faculty, and increasing job competition from clinical sites have contributed to this shortage. According to the American Academy of Colleges of Nursing report on 2016-2017 enrollment and graduations in nursing programs, U.S. nursing schools turned away 64,067

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qualified applicants from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2016 due to an insufficient number of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors, and budget constraints. Most nursing schools responding to the survey pointed to faculty shortages as a reason for not accepting all qualified applicants into programs.

The average education requirement for a nurse educator is at least a master's degree, with a doctoral degree generally preferred. According to the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, the average salary of a graduate prepared nurse practitioner, across settings and specialties, is \$97,083. By contrast, American Academy of Colleges of Nursing reported in March 2016 the average salary for a master's-prepared assistant professor in schools of nursing was \$77,022. The average salary for a nurse educator in Washington State community and technical colleges is \$62,000.

**Summary of Bill:** The nurse educator incentive grant program at the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is established. Nurse educators are eligible to participate in the program immediately after commencing employment as a nurse educator at a community and technical college if they have earned a doctorate from an approved program.

The maximum benefit amount under the program is the equivalent of tuition and fees at an approved doctorate of nursing program. The participant becomes ineligible for the program if they cease employment as a nurse educator at a community or technical college.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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: A few years ago we created a program at the University of Washington Tacoma to prepare more doctorate level nurses. The goal was to fill the nurse educator roles in the state's community and technical colleges. The problem we have had is there are not enough nursing slots available in our education programs and that is because of the educator shortage. Under this bill the nurse educators would qualify for this grant program. We think this would incentivize more people to complete the doctorate and then teach in the community and technical colleges. One of the biggest obstacles to recruiting nursing faculty is salaries. These bills would help that.

OTHER: There is an incredible demand for high quality nursing programs and our agency seeks to address this by adding an additional 2500 high demand student slots. In addition to the challenge of building capacity we have the challenge of a nationwide nursing faculty shortage. This program would be an asset to our colleges in attracting and retaining high quality faculty. Our only request is that you fund this program commensurate with the level of desired outcomes..

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Randi Becker, Prime Sponsor; Gloria Brigham, Education Director, Washington State Nurses Association.

OTHER: Nate Humphrey, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

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