
College & Workforce Development Committee

2SSB 5789

Brief Description: Creating the Washington career and college pathways innovation challenge program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Nobles, Conway, Das, Frockt, Kuderer, Liias, Nguyen and Wilson, C.; by request of Student Achievement Council).

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Washington Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Program, administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council, to provide grants to local and regional entities to increase statewide educational attainment.
- Repeals and modifies parts of the Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality in Higher Education Program.

The Washington Fund for Innovation and Quality in Higher Education Program (WFIQ Program) was originally established as the Washington Fund for Excellence in Higher Education Program in 1991. The program was established to allow the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) to award incentive grants to state public or private nonprofit institutions of

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higher education to encourage programs designed to address specific system problems. Priority is given to proposals involving more than one sector of education, and the institutions of higher education are required to submit some financial support as part of the grant. The WFIQ Program has never been funded.

State Educational Attainment Goals.

The WSAC provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and is tasked with administering programs to support students and higher education in the state. The WSAC is statutorily required to propose educational attainment goals and priorities to meet the state's higher education needs. In 2013 the WSAC established the following educational attainment goals for 2023 that the Legislature adopted in 2014:

- all adults in Washington, ages 25-44, will have a high school diploma or equivalent; and
- at least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25-44, will have a postsecondary credential.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Program (Challenge Program) is established under the administration of the WSAC. The Challenge Program's purpose is to meet statewide educational goals by developing regional and local partnerships to:

- increase postsecondary enrollment, success, and completion;
- to eliminate educational opportunity gaps for students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and foster and homeless youth;
- enhance the ability of Washington residents to achieve their own goals in life; and
- increase the skills and talents of Washington's workforce.

The WSAC must award grants based on a competitive process to local and regional partnerships that represent cross-sector collaborations. For design and administration of the Challenge Program, the WSAC must consult with representatives of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Council of Presidents, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Commission on African American Affairs, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, the Washington State LGBTQ Commission, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, and the Washington State Women's Commission. The WSAC must consider applications with at least one of the following criteria:

- plan and pilot innovative initiatives to raise educational attainment and reach new populations;
- engage community-based organizations and resources to reach the range of populations living in the region;
- develop programs that recognize the needs of specific populations to be successful in postsecondary education and training;
- expand the use of integrated work-based learning models and career connected learning;
- provide financial support to cover expenses beyond tuition and fees, and other services and supports for students to enroll and complete education and training;
- further the development of innovations, such as the use of mastery-based measurements of student achievement as the basis of awarding degrees and certificates, expansion of

- accelerated programs, and alternative scheduling to meet adult needs; and
- include matching funds.

The WSAC is permitted to hire new staff to support the Challenge Program and may solicit and receive public or private gifts, grants, and endowments for the Challenge Program. The WSAC must provide an annual report by September 1 each year to the Governor and the Legislature regarding: the grants awarded; progress on increasing high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and completion; and disaggregated data for the Challenge Program.

The WFIQ Account is renamed the Washington Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Program Account, and the account's permissible uses are modified to allow the WSAC to award grants under the Challenge Program. The Challenge Program Account is permitted to retain its interest under the Treasurer's Trust Fund. The WFIQ Program is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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