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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1821**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** House Postsecondary Education & Workforce (originally sponsored by Representatives Slatter, Timmons, and Pollet)

AN ACT Relating to creating a postsecondary credential transparency work group; and adding new sections to chapter 28C.18 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A credential transparency work group is created within the board.

(2) The purpose of the credential transparency work group is to:

(a) Increase postsecondary credential transparency by improving, through a student-centered and worker-centered focus, the ability of students, workers, employers, educators, policymakers, and the general public to better understand and evaluate the full range of credentials delivered or issued in, or funded or governed by, the state;

(b) Identify and disseminate valuable fields of information across credentials to support understanding, evaluation, and decision making. Such fields include, but are not limited to, credential type, time to degree, initial and potential lifetime earnings, employer demand location, modality, credential provider, and potential job and career paths;

(c) Review existing state credential platforms, data infrastructures, and projects; and

(d) Identify best practices to increase credential transparency through, for example, existing programs at state institutions of higher education, licensing, registered apprenticeships, and career connected learning.

(3) The credential transparency work group shall provide recommendations to, and may contract with, at least one state credential transparency platform. The work group shall consider credential transparency platforms, statutes, and policies in other states in recommending or developing the following:

(a) A shared definition of credential;

(b) Common credential terminology;

(c) Changes, if needed, to state credential platforms, data infrastructures, and projects to support understanding, transparency, evaluation, and decision making;

(d) A proposal to recognize learning that occurs through paid work and career connected learning opportunities;

(e) A statewide communications plan to increase credential awareness among credential providers and potential users including, but not limited to, students, workers, employers, teachers, guidance counselors, and parents; and

(f) The continuation and scope of its work under subsection (2) of this section.

(4) The credential transparency work group shall identify up to four workforce industry sectors that have statewide reach and contribute to the state's workforce development system to develop industry demonstration projects to test the concepts of credential transparency. The board, in consultation with the work group, shall communicate with employer and worker associations within those sectors to identify potential applicants for demonstration funding. Two statewide occupations within each sector will be identified as the focus for the industry demonstration projects. Each industry shall select a lead organization and a network of partners to fulfill the requirements of the demonstration projects.

(a) Each of the four industry demonstration projects must:

(i) Identify diverse approaches to obtaining credentials across a range of providers within the chosen occupations;

(ii) Chart the skills, behaviors, abilities, and knowledge required for occupational pathways within the chosen occupations; and

(iii) Collect credential data within the chosen occupations, defined and determined by the work group using the common credential terminology.

(b) The board, in consultation with the work group, shall provide technical assistance to the industry demonstration projects to complete occupational skill analysis using the common credential terminology identified by the work group.

(c) The industry sectors demonstration project leads shall report to the work group the preliminary results of the data collected under this subsection by October 1, 2024, and final results by October 1, 2025.

(d) To the extent possible, the work group shall incorporate the data and information collected under (a) of this subsection into web-based tools and services, maintained and published by the board, that present information to allow users such as students, workers, employers, educators, and others to understand, evaluate, and make decisions about credentials and maximize the user's most equitable outcome.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28C.18 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The board shall staff the credential transparency work group and as appropriated, administer funds and other resources to support the industry demonstration projects established in section 1 of this act, the enhancement of credential transparency portals, and activities necessary to make recommendations described in section 1 of this act. The executive director of the board shall have authority, in consultation with the work group, to add members to the work group as needed.

(2) The credential transparency work group must consist of, but is not limited to, representatives from the following groups:

(a) The public four-year institutions of higher education;

(b) The community and technical colleges;

(c) The independent colleges of Washington member institutions;

(d) Industry including employers and worker organizations;

(e) Postsecondary and K-12 students;

(f) The state board for community and technical colleges;

(g) The council of presidents;

(h) The independent colleges of Washington;

(i) The office of the superintendent of public instruction;

(j) The state board of education;

(k) The employment security department;

(l) The Washington student achievement council;

(m) The northwest career colleges federation;

(n) The state's workforce development councils;

(o) The Washington state apprenticeship and training council;

(p) Career connect Washington;

(q) The department of licensing;

(r) The department of veterans affairs;

(s) The board; and

(t) Job seekers and mid-career workers.

(3) The credential transparency work group shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, findings from and recommendations for section 1(3) of this act by November 30, 2024.

(4) The credential transparency work group shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, findings and recommendations from section 1(4) of this act by November 30, 2025, and each November 30th thereafter.

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