

RCW 28B.45.010 Legislative findings. The legislature finds that the benefits of higher education should be more widely available to the citizens of the state of Washington. The legislature also finds that a citizen's place of residence can restrict that citizen's access to educational opportunity at the upper-division and graduate level.

Because most of the state-supported baccalaureate universities are located in areas removed from major metropolitan areas, the legislature finds that many of the state's citizens, especially those citizens residing in the central Puget Sound area, the Tri-Cities, Spokane, Vancouver, and Yakima, have insufficient and inequitable access to upper-division baccalaureate and graduate education.

This lack of sufficient educational opportunities in urban areas makes it difficult or impossible for place-bound individuals, who are unable to relocate, to complete a baccalaureate or graduate degree. It also exacerbates the difficulty financially needy students have in attending school, since many of those students need to work, and work is not always readily available in some communities where the baccalaureate institutions of higher education are located.

The lack of sufficient educational opportunities in metropolitan areas also affects the economy of the underserved communities. Businesses benefit from access to the research and teaching capabilities of institutions of higher education. The absence of these institutions from some of the state's major urban centers prevents beneficial interaction between businesses in these communities and the state's universities.

The Washington state master plan for higher education, adopted by the *higher education coordinating board, recognizes the need to expand upper-division and graduate educational opportunities in the state's large urban centers. The board has also attempted to provide a means for helping to meet future educational demand through a system of campuses in the state's major urban areas.

The legislature endorses the assignment of responsibility to serve these urban centers that the board has made to various institutions of higher education. The legislature also endorses the creation of campuses for the University of Washington and Washington State University.

The legislature recognizes that, among their other responsibilities, the state's comprehensive community colleges share with the four-year universities and colleges the responsibility of providing the first two years of a baccalaureate education. It is the intent of the legislature that the four-year institutions and the community colleges work as cooperative partners to ensure the successful and efficient operation of the state's system of higher education. The legislature further intends that the four-year institutions work cooperatively with the community colleges to ensure that the campuses created under this chapter are operated as models of a two plus two educational system. [2017 c 52 § 3; 1989 1st ex.s. c 7 § 1.]

***Reviser's note:** The higher education coordinating board was abolished by 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 § 301, effective July 1, 2012.