H-0782.1

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**HOUSE BILL 1482**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Pollet, Zeiger, Stanford, Haler, Bergquist, and Tarleton

AN ACT Relating to an analysis of regional higher education capacity to meet educational attainment goals; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature recognizes that in order to meet the statewide educational attainment goals adopted by the student achievement council in the ten-year roadmap and encouraged by the legislature and to meet the needs of the state's economy and provide residents with an opportunity to advance their well-being and quality of life, the legislature needs to make informed decisions regarding the state's capacity at institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016. The legislature intends to make decisions regarding capacity at the institutions of higher education based on strong analyses of existing capacity and projected demand. The legislature's goal is to determine where capacity is inadequate to meet the needs and goals for specific geographical areas, populations, and degree and certificate needs.

(2) The student achievement council shall conduct a study to assess the gap between demand for higher education in various regions of the state and the capacity of higher education institutions as defined in RCW 28B.10.016 to meet demand. The state board for community and technical colleges, the public four-year institutions of higher education, the workforce training and education coordinating board, and the office of financial management, shall collaborate with the council in conducting the study.

(3) The student achievement council may hire a consultant to conduct all or part of the study. Specifically, the council shall:

(a) Assess the operational and physical capacity at institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016 including consideration of projected expansion through capital and other projects and the impact of e-learning on capacity. The council shall use data provided by the state board for community and technical colleges and the public four-year institutions of higher education to assess operational capacity and physical capacity;

(b) Assess the projected student demand for postsecondary education through 2023 in various geographical regions of the state including consideration of multiple educational pathways and student backgrounds, the mix of degrees and credentials needed, current trends, and improvements in educational delivery;

(c) Use, among other information, data and analyses developed for the needs assessment in RCW 28B.77.080.

(4) An initial report to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature must present the results of the study, including options for meeting regional capacity deficiencies and additional resources needed to meet educational attainment goals. The initial report shall include an assessment of whether the ability to meet the statewide educational attainment goals is constrained in regional areas of the state. The assessment must address whether there is a lack of accessible public baccalaureate granting institutions to serve the demand in regional areas of the state, including Bellevue, Seattle, and Yakima, and whether existing community and technical colleges could expand their baccalaureate degree granting capacity. The initial report must recommend whether further planning to implement various options is needed. Options for higher education capacity expansion may include, but are not limited to:

(a) Increasing capacity at existing institutions of higher education;

(b) Allowing for branch campuses at existing institutions of higher education to become regional institutions;

(c) Establishing new, additional regional institutions of higher education;

(d) Expanding partnerships between community and technical colleges and public four-year institutions of higher education;

(e) Allowing community and technical colleges to grant traditional and applied baccalaureate degrees; and

(f) Other options for expansion.

(5)(a) By December 1, 2015, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the student achievement council shall submit a status report to the governor and the legislature.

(b) By December 1, 2016, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the student achievement council shall submit the initial report to the governor and the legislature.

(6) This section expires July 1, 2017.

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