

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1755

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 25, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to allowing regional universities to offer doctorate level degrees in education.

**Brief Description:** Allowing regional universities to offer doctorate level degrees in education.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Leavitt, Van Werven, Bergquist, Corry, Ybarra, Volz, Pollet, Dent, Lovick, Doglio, Ormsby and Santos.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/04/19, 95-2; 1/22/20, 95-1.

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/14/19, 3/26/19 [DP]; 2/20/20, 2/25/20 [DP].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the regional universities to offer applied, but not research, doctorate level degrees in education.

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Stanford, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Brown and Liias.

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

**Background:** Central Washington University, Eastern Washington University, and Western Washington University each offer masters degrees in education. Eastern Washington University offers applied, but not research, doctorate degrees in physical therapy. Western Washington University offers applied, but not research, doctorate degrees in audiology. The University of Washington and Washington State University offer both applied and research doctorate degrees in education.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Generally, an applied doctorate degree in education (Ed.D.) is designed for advanced professional practice focusing on the application of existing research and knowledge applied in the field, rather than on the creation of new research for the field. A typical Ed.D. program includes classroom study, field placements, and administrative practice.

**Summary of Bill:** The boards of trustees of the regional universities may offer applied, but not research, doctorate level degrees in education.

**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 (Regular Session 2019):** PRO: This bill allows the regionals to offer applied doctorates in education. These are designed from advanced professional practice focused on the application of existing research and knowledge. There are over 600 administrators and principals practicing out in the field that do not have a doctorate. A recent survey we conducted indicates that many of them would like to pursue a doctorate credential but are limited based on geography. This program would be self-supporting with no money from the state. We work with school leaders in mostly rural areas and many of them are also interested in participating in a doctoral program. The top five barriers facing school leaders in accessing doctoral education include cost and the location of classes. We think a hybrid program would make sense for many of these students and would help the superintendent pipeline. An Ed.D. helps make people better candidates for school leadership positions. Expanding this program to the regionals will help expand diversity for the school leadership pipeline.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Mari Leavitt, Prime Sponsor; Tim Bruce, Western Washington University; Don Larsen, Western Washington University; Tara Haskins, Eastern Washington University; Antonio Sanchez, Central Washington University.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Regular Session 2020):** PRO: Regional universities need permission to do this work at no cost to the state general budget. We hear from school districts across the state that they prefer to hire people with an education doctorate degree. For our place-bound workers, working members with children, they are unable to drive across the mountains or to Seattle while working full time in order to participate in these programs. We want our school administrators to have best practices in mind to ensure that our students are being taught with the most current practices. Passing this bill is Western's number one policy priority this session. This will have a positive impact for educators across the state in helping them upgrade their knowledge and career options. Assuming the bill passes we already have a full cohort lined up to begin the program next fall. Thank you for opening access to higher education and this is another step.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Mari Leavitt, Prime Sponsor; Becca Kenna-Schenk, Western Washington University; David Buri, Eastern Washington University; Antonio Sanchez, Central Washington University.

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