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**Governor signs bill establishing new Student Achievement Council**

**OLYMPIA** – Gov. Chris Gregoire signed legislation today creating the new Student Achievement Council. The law transfers many responsibilities of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, including its current staff, to the new cabinet-level agency, effective July 1, 2012.

The Student Achievement Council will provide planning, analysis and administrative oversight for a wide range of activities related to public and private higher education in Washington, as well as take on a new role developing more effective policies to guide and monitor the success of K-12 student transition to higher education.

A primary goal for the council will be to raise educational attainment in Washington, which lags most states in the percentage of its younger citizens who have earned a postsecondary certificate or an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree.

The legislation, [HB 2483](#), provides the following over-arching goals:

- a) To propose to the governor and the Legislature goals for increasing educational attainment in Washington, recommend the resources necessary to achieve the goals, and monitor progress toward meeting the goals;
- b) To propose to the governor, the Legislature, and the state's educational institutions, improvements and innovations needed to continually adapt the state's educational institutions to evolving educational attainment needs; and
- c) To advocate for higher education through various means, with the goal of educating the general public on the economic, social and civic benefits of postsecondary education, and the consequent need for increased financial support and civic commitment in the state.

The law requires the council to link the work of educational programs, schools, and the institutions from secondary through postsecondary education and training and through careers. It requires heightened collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the State Board of Education, the Professional Educator Standards Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the four-year public institutions of higher education, and independent universities, colleges, and private career schools.

The HECB, a 10-member citizen board formed in 1986, will be replaced by a nine-member council composed of five citizen members, including one student, and four sector representatives, one each from the public four-year institutions, the SBCTC, the independent institutions, and OSPI.

Among the many duties assigned to the new council is the continuing responsibility to administer state financial aid programs, which provide more than \$300 million annually in state support to more than 100,000 students, most of whom are from the state's lowest-income families.

A high priority for Gov. Gregoire, the law establishing the new council won bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate during the 2012 Legislative Session. Rep. Larry Seaquist and Sen. Derek Kilmer sponsored House and Senate versions of the bill.

Don Bennett, executive director of the HECB, will continue in that capacity during the transition to the new council, providing leadership for realignment of current and continuing responsibilities to support the expanded mission of raising educational attainment and improving K-12-higher education student transition.

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