



Help us plan the future of higher education in Washington

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is seeking your ideas to help us plan the future of our community and technical colleges and universities. In December, the Board must complete a “master plan” that will guide how our higher education system grows and changes over the next 10 years.

This is a crucial task. Our education system has long been the envy of the world, and today’s baby boomers are the most highly educated generation in American history. But we are sliding backwards as other countries outperform us, and as a growing number of Americans are left behind by an education system that doesn’t meet their needs.

The next generation will need even more education to succeed – and it includes more people who face bigger barriers to educational success: immigrants, people of color, low-income children, and under-educated young adults.

Creating opportunity for the next generation is at the very heart of the American tradition. Thomas Jefferson passionately believed that education was central to realizing the hope of a society built on virtue and talent, instead of the circumstances of one’s birth.

Increasing educational opportunity and success for the next generation will require new thinking, new strategies, and new investments. Our government, social institutions and our prosperity in this new, increasingly complex and interconnected world will depend on our ability to nurture and sustain an education system capable of developing the full capability of our citizens – more now than ever before in human history.

What will our democracy, our culture, and our economy look like in 10 or 20 years? If current trends are not reversed, we face economic decline, deepening divisions between rich and poor, and a deeper gulf between the people and our government. The need to reverse these trends is urgent, and it will require the united efforts of people in every community in Washington. That’s why we are asking you to join us in creating a visionary, workable, equitable path to a better future for the people of our state.

We hope you will share your thoughts at one of the public forums we’re holding this fall, or at the Board’s regular meeting on October 25. You also can submit comments by email at: masterplan@hecb.wa.gov.

2008 Strategic Master Plan for Washington Higher Education

Public Forums

Vancouver Public Forum

Thursday, October 18

4:30 - 6:30 pm

The Historic Reserve – Hamilton Bldg.

Bellingham Public Forum

Tuesday, October 23

4:30 - 6:30 pm

Quality Inn Baron Suites – Atlantis Room

Board Meeting / Public Hearing

Thursday, October 25

1:00 – 4:00 pm

WSU Vancouver

Spokane Public Forum

Monday, October 29

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

NW Museum of Arts & Culture – Gilkey Room

Tacoma Public Forum

Tuesday, October 30

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Tacoma Art Museum – The Event Space

Seattle Public Forum

Thursday, November 1

3:30 pm – 5 pm

*North Seattle Community College
Room ED 2843A - Peter C. Ku Education Bldg.*

Why do we need a new plan?

Our world is changing in ways that provide a new opportunity, and a new challenge.

The new opportunity is this:

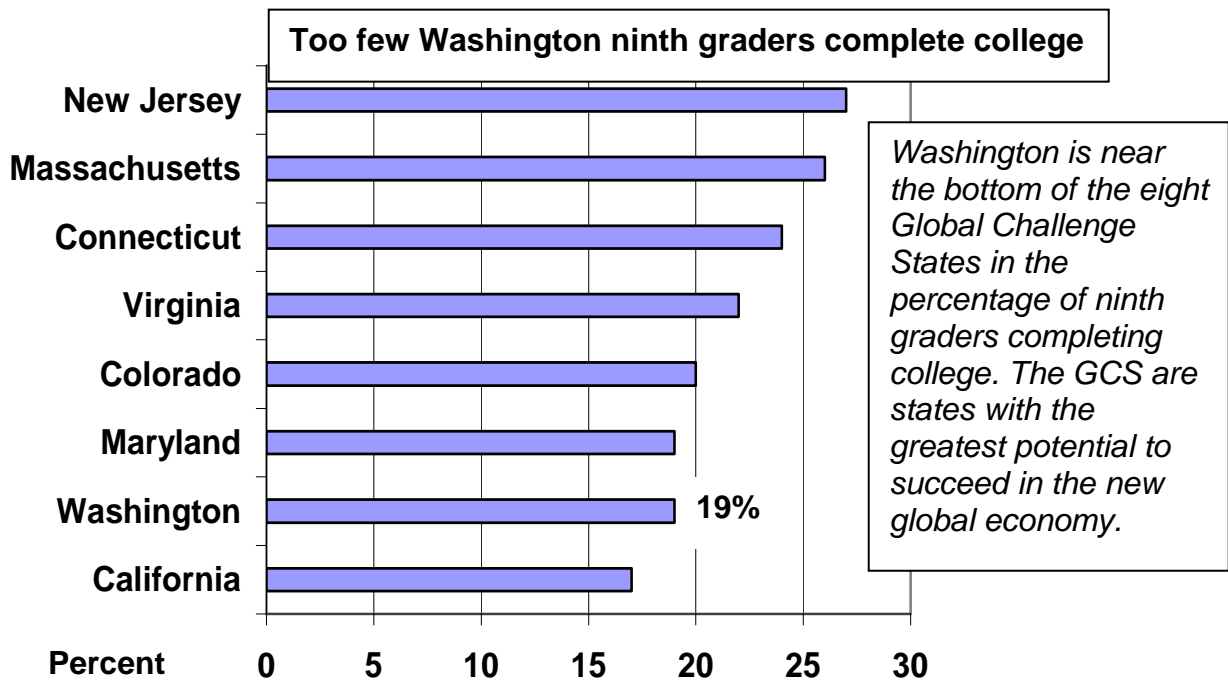
In the next few years, our state’s economy is expected to continue to grow rapidly, increasing the need for educated and skilled workers. At the same time the baby boomers will begin to retire in record numbers, opening up thousands of additional new jobs and civic leadership positions for members of the next generation.

The new challenge is this:

In the next few years, Washington will need to meet the rising demand for skilled and talented citizens by educating a much greater percentage of our young and middle-aged workers to much higher levels than we are currently doing. Population growth and immigration of educated workers will not be enough to fill these needs.

Today, about three quarters of all family-wage jobs require some form of education or training beyond high school. But a third of the working-age adults in our state have a high school diploma or less. Already, 51% of Washington employers report that they have trouble finding people with the skills they need to expand their businesses.

At the high end of the job market – the jobs that require four-year college degrees or more – Washington imports talent, because we don’t graduate enough people with degrees in science, math and engineering. Beyond the economic benefits of raising the education level of more of Washington’s citizens, important social benefits result such as increased voter participation and volunteerism, combined with lower crime rates, health care costs and public assistance.



We can't meet this new challenge by doing what we have always done.

If we keep doing what we have always done, we will get the same results we've always gotten. We will continue to have too many high school dropouts, too many under-educated adults, and not enough educated people to fill the jobs that will make our communities prosper. And the gap between rich and poor in our society will continue to widen.

We need fresh thinking about how to raise the level of educational attainment for Washington residents – not some day in the distant future, but right now. The opportunity is immediate, and the need is urgent.

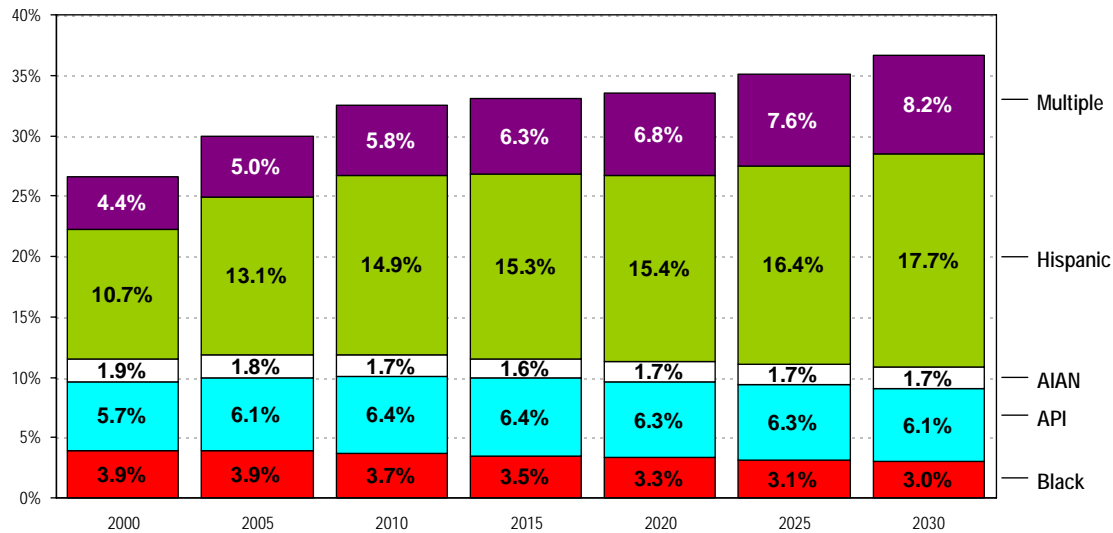
Washington Learns, the Governor's special commission on the future of education, called for a seamless, cradle-through-career education system that keeps all of us engaged in learning for life.

Governor Gregoire has created a P-20 Council to promote the Washington Learns vision of a seamless, coherent and accountable system that truly serves all learners. The plan the Higher Education Coordinating Board is creating will be a major step towards bringing that vision to life.

The Washington Learns report provided direction and diagnosis of some of the key problems we must face:

- **We need to create a higher education system that serves all – not just some – Washington residents.** If 75% of today's good jobs require some form of higher education, we can expect that in another generation, it will be 90% or even 100%.
- **We need more graduates in math, science and engineering.** The leading industries of the 21st century economy require far more graduates in these fields than we are producing.
- **We need teachers in early learning and public school programs who are better prepared to teach math and science, and to educate students from every culture and income group, and with every learning style.** Our schools urgently need teachers with 21st century skills to meet the needs of all 21st century kids.

By 2030, 37% of the students in our schools will come from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.



These students are more likely to come from low-income families and have different cultural expectations, life experiences, and learning needs than those from white, middle- or upper-income families.

We need to create an education system that adapts to the needs of students, instead of one that requires students to adapt to the system. Across the education spectrum – from preschool through graduate school – we need an education system that works for everyone. Students with different learning styles, students of color, low-income students and immigrants often have a very hard time getting what they need in today’s classrooms. People who can’t afford to move to be near education institutions are also left out. Our economic future depends on our ability to change this, so that all learners have access to the educational opportunities they need to succeed.

We need a higher education system that provides a seamless transition when students graduate from K-12 schools. To do this, we need to help middle and high school students explore their dreams and talents, learn about possible careers and the education they require, and chart their own course to success. And we need stronger partnerships between public schools and higher education to achieve this.

We need to provide more opportunities for under-educated adults. Only a tiny fraction of under-educated adults and immigrants who need to learn both English and job skills are enrolled in adult basic education and job training. We have promising new programs, but they are not available to all who need them.

We need to stimulate creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial imagination. Our unique position in the global economy, coupled with our growing diversity, make Washington a crossroads for new ideas and points of view. If we make the most of these assets, we can be the spawning ground for more new industries and for artistic innovation.

We need to create a culture of collaboration between different levels within the education system, and between education, business, community organizations, and faith organizations. By working together we can make the most of limited resources, and create a culture that supports and values learning.

How do we get from here to there?

Members of the Higher Education Coordinating Board have identified two fundamental goals, and framed some key questions we hope you will consider and discuss with us.

Goal 1: We will create a higher education system that truly serves everyone – a system that anyone can enter and afford, and a system that personalizes education so that everyone can succeed.

Planning questions:

- How can our state build *a college bound culture in our high schools*? How can we keep students engaged, mentor and counsel them as they explore career options, and expand parent involvement in their education?
- How can we *improve teacher and school leader education* programs so that public schools truly serve as the great equalizer for students from every culture, country, and income level? How can we improve teacher preparation to teach math and science?
- How can we *make it easier for students to keep moving up*? For instance, how can we encourage adults in basic literacy programs to enroll in more advanced job skills programs that would increase their earning power? How can we smooth the transition between community college and four-year colleges? What counseling and academic advising programs are most effective at keeping students engaged and motivated?
- How can we *increase financial support for low-income students* – both recent high school graduates and adults? How can we provide better support to people who can only attend part time because of competing work and family obligations?
- How do we provide *more education to more people at an affordable cost*? Are we making the most efficient and effective use of new communication technologies to do this? Are there other ways to reduce costs that don't compromise quality?
- How can we *provide education and job training to people who are place bound*? Can we find ways to take the education to the learners, wherever they are?
- How should we *assign accountability for students completing the programs they enroll in*? What incentives – for both students and colleges – would produce significant increases in completion rates?

Goal 2: We will create a higher education system that drives greater economic prosperity, innovation, and opportunity.

Planning questions:

- How can we *meet employer demand* for students with degrees and training in *high-demand, high-skill fields* by improving our ability to forecast what will be needed?
- How do higher education institutions need to be *better partners with employers and regional economic development agencies*?
- Can we engage the media, employers, and community organizations in a campaign to *encourage more students to choose careers in math, science and engineering*?
- How can we *integrate basic education and job training*, so that under-educated adults get both at the same time? How can we bring promising programs that do this to scale, so they are available to all who would benefit?
- What *strategic investments in research* should we make? How can they be sustained? How should we support *translating research into commercial applications* that create new jobs?

We need your help to answer these questions, and to plan our future.

Our higher education system has helped Washington become the prosperous state it is today. We can all be proud of the quality and variety of the educational institutions and programs we already have. But now it's our job to take it to the next level, and to rethink, retool, and re-imagine our education system for a world where economic, scientific, and technological change demands a higher level of learning than ever before.

Of all the investments of tax dollars we make, education pays the highest dividends. But we are challenged to find ways to stretch our public resources as never before if we are to meet the challenge of educating more people in time to meet the urgent needs of our growing population and our changing economy.

This is a challenge that deserves the broadest possible public participation, and the most careful thought about how to translate our most deeply held values into programs that provide hope, opportunity and upward mobility to all the people of our state.

We hope you will join us in this work.