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HOUSE BILL No. 1278

Proposed Changes to January 20, 2026 printing by AM127802

DIGEST OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Graduate programs. Adds SB 68 which requires each state educational institution that offers a two year graduate degree program in mental or behavioral health to evaluate the graduate degree program to determine the feasibility of providing the program in a specifically structured manner to allow full-time students to complete the program within: (1) one year; or (2) five years if the program is combined with a baccalaureate degree program. Requires certain state educational institutions to offer at least one graduate degree program in one or more certain disciplines that is structured to allow full-time students to complete the program within: (1) one year; or (2) five years if the program is combined with a baccalaureate degree program. Requires certain state educational institutions to report to the commission for higher education (commission) regarding the graduate degree programs. Requires the commission to post the submitted reports on the commission's website.

A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning professions and occupations.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

- 1 [SECTION 1. IC 21-41-18 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE
2 AS A NEW CHAPTER TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE
3 JULY 1, 2026]:
4 Chapter 18. Graduate Programs in Mental or Behavioral
5 Health
6 Sec. 1. This chapter does not apply to Ivy Tech Community
7 College or Vincennes University.
8 Sec. 2. Each state educational institution that offers a two (2)
9 year graduate degree program in mental or behavioral health shall
10 evaluate the graduate degree program to determine the feasibility,
11 if any, of providing the graduate degree program in a specifically
12 structured manner to allow a full-time student to complete the

HB 1278—LS 6838/DI 147



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graduate degree within:

(1) one (1) year; or

(2) five (5) years if the graduate degree program is combined with a baccalaureate degree program.

Sec. 3. Not later than July 1, 2028, each state educational institution shall offer at least one (1) graduate degree program in one (1) or more of the following disciplines that is specifically structured to allow a full-time student to complete the graduate degree as described in section 2(1) or 2(2) of this chapter:

(1) Social work.

(2) Clinical addiction counseling.

(3) Mental health counseling.

(4) Marriage and family therapy.

(5) School counseling.

(6) Counseling.

(7) Psychology.

Sec. 4. (a) Not later than November 1, 2028, each state educational institution shall report to the commission for higher education, in a form prescribed by the commission for higher education, information regarding each graduate degree program that the state educational institution is offering in compliance with section 3 of this chapter.

(b) Not later than November 1, 2032, each state educational institution shall report to the commission for higher education, in a form prescribed by the commission for higher education, the following information for each graduate degree program described in section 3 of this chapter offered by the state educational institution:

(1) For each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic years, a description of each graduate degree program.

(2) The estimated student cost savings of the graduate degree program.

(3) For a graduate degree program that allows completion within one (1) year, the number of students:

(A) enrolled in the graduate degree program; and

(B) who completed the graduate degree program on time;

for each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic years.

(4) For a graduate degree program combined with a baccalaureate degree program that allows for completion within five (5) years, the number of students:

HB 1278—LS 6838/DI 147



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(A) enrolled in the graduate degree program; and
(B) who completed or are on track to complete the
graduate degree program on time;
for each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic
years.

(5) Any other information requested by the commission for
higher education.

(c) The commission for higher education shall post the reports
submitted under this section on the commission for higher
education's website.

Sec. 5. The commission for higher education may consider
graduate degrees described in section 3 of this chapter completed
within the time frame described in section 2 of this chapter for the
purposes of the higher educational operating funding outcomes
based formula created by the commission for higher education
under IC 21-18-16-2.

Sec. 6. This chapter expires July 1, 2033.

SECTION ~~2~~^[2]. IC 25-23-1-3, AS AMENDED BY
P.L.148-2023, SECTION 12, IS AMENDED TO READ AS
FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 3. At any time there is
a vacancy **or expiration of a term**, the Indiana State Nurses
Association shall recommend to the governor a list of qualified nurses
for appointment to the board in the number of not less than twice the
number of:

(1) nurse vacancies to be filled; **or**

(2) **nurse appointments to be made.**

SECTION ~~16~~^[3]. IC 25-23-1-20.1, AS AMENDED BY
P.L.148-2023, SECTION 16, IS AMENDED TO READ AS
FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 20.1. (a) As used in this
section, "eligible ~~associate or bachelor's degree registered~~ nursing
program" means **an a practical nursing program or an** associate or
bachelor's degree registered nursing program that:

(1) is accredited by the board; and

(2) has an annual rate of successful completion of the National
Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) score of at least eighty
percent (80%).

(b) As used in this section, "nursing program" means any of the
following:

(1) A licensed practical nursing program.

(2) An associate degree nursing program.

(3) A diploma nursing program.

(4) A baccalaureate degree nursing program.

HB 1278—LS 6838/DI 147



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(c) ~~An eligible associate degree or bachelor's degree registered nursing program that has been operating for at least five (5) years may increase enrollment in the program at any rate the program considers appropriate.~~ **An institution that has been operating an eligible nursing program for at least five (5) years may increase the enrollment in any eligible nursing program at any rate the institution considers appropriate.**

(d) A nursing program that:

(1) is operated by a postsecondary educational institution, as defined in IC 21-7-13-6(a)(1);

(2) was accredited by the board on a date after June 30, 2020; and

(3) has been operating for at least one (1) year; may increase its enrollment rate by not more than one hundred percent (100%).[\[](#)

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HB 1278—LS 6838/DI 147



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