

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6639

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As of January 25, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to establishing the Washington teach math-science program to increase the number and enhance the preparation of secondary school mathematics and science teachers.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the Washington Teach Math-Science program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Pridemore, Schmidt, Keiser, McAuliffe and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 1/25/06.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

**Staff:** Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

**Background:** The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HEC Board), created in 1985, administers the state's student financial aid programs and provides planning, coordination, monitoring, and policy analysis for higher education in Washington. Major functions of the board include: developing and monitoring a strategic master plan for higher education, developing and recommending policies to enhance public higher education, serving as an advocate for students and the higher education system, and administering student financial aid programs.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) has statutory authority for alternative routes to certification and educator assessments. The PESB is also responsible for adopting policies and practices for teacher, administrator, and educational staff associates' preparation and certification. In addition, the PESB specifies the types and kinds of educator certificates, hears certification appeals, adopts rules, applies for federal funds, and submits annual reports to agencies and legislative committees. The PESB also maintains data on educator certification, the quality of preparation programs, and employer needs.

The future teachers conditional scholarship program, which is administered by the HEC Board, allows one year of the conditional scholarship to be forgiven for every two years the recipient teaches full-time in a Washington K-12 public school. Loan forgiveness is accelerated to allow one year of the scholarship to be forgiven for every year of full-time teaching in the designated shortage area. Priority for the scholarships is given to students seeking endorsements in math, science, special education, or who are bilingual. For 2005-2006, there were 357 applicants for the 69 conditional scholarships that were awarded.

The alternative route conditional scholarship program, which is administered by the HEC Board and the PESB, allows one year of the conditional scholarship to be forgiven for every two years taught in a public school by teachers who received their residency teaching certificate after participating in an alternative route certification program. For 2005-2006,

there are 109 alternative route interns, with 93 of them receiving conditional scholarships. Federal and state dollars provided the funding for these scholarships.

There is concern that Washington students are not adequately prepared in mathematics and science and that this has negative effects for them, beginning during school-aged years and continuing on to the adult working years.

**Summary of Bill:** The Washington Teach Math-Science Program is created. The program is made up of four components: teacher preparation programs, a public-private advisory committee, targeted conditional scholarships and loan repayments, and targeted alternative routes conditional scholarships and loan repayments.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HEC Board) and the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) shall jointly select two institutions of higher education to develop and implement a comprehensive program to prepare secondary math and science teachers. The programs shall be in place by fall 2007 and must include a streamlined curriculum that allows students to earn a bachelor's degree and residency certification in secondary math or science within four academic years. The program shall also include math recruitment and outreach to prospective students who have expressed an interest in math and science. The HEC Board and the PESB must develop and release requests for proposals to participate in the comprehensive program by June 15, 2006.

The HEC Board and the PESB shall convene an advisory committee, made up of business and community leaders, to solicit and accept grants and donations for authorized professional development opportunities for students who are participating or who have participated in the comprehensive program. The advisory committee will also identify and develop authorized professional development opportunities for these students, including internship experiences, best practice seminars, mentors and other supports during the first five years of teaching, and summer work experiences for teachers in businesses and industries related to math and science. An account designated as the Washington Teach Math-Science Professional Development Account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. Grants and donations received for authorized professional development opportunities must be deposited into this account, and only the director or a designee from the HEC Board can authorize expenditures for professional development opportunities.

Beginning July 1, 2006, the HEC Board will increase the number of conditional scholarships awarded under the future teachers conditional scholarship and loan repayment program to eligible participants who plan to teach secondary math or science by seventy more than that awarded for the 2005-2006 school year. Those teachers who receive funds for teaching secondary math or science will have one year of the loan cancelled for each year taught.

Beginning July 1, 2006, the HEC Board will increase the number of alternative route conditional scholarships awarded to eligible participants who plan to teach secondary math or science by thirty more than that awarded for the 2005-2006 school year. For every year that a participant teaches math or science in a district with a documented shortage of math or science teachers, one year of his or her loan will be cancelled.

**Appropriation:** \$850,000.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 20, 2006.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Section nine, dealing with investment earnings from the treasury trust fund, takes effect on July 1, 2006. The remainder takes effect ninety days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** This bill sets a solid goal for improving math and science instruction. It is advantageous to use the already existing system used by the HEC Board to distribute the additional scholarships instead of creating a new system. The support for the alternative route program is very welcomed, and the additional students could easily be accommodated. There is large additional demand for this program. Any additional funds for alternative routes and incentives that increase the pool of math and science teachers is welcome. The pilots should include institutions associated with one or more community or technical colleges; using a partnership with community colleges will allow placebound students to be included in the program. There is some question about how this will improve the quality of math and science teachers, and it was suggested that the advisory board should include math and science teachers. There are some technical amendments that will be suggested before the bill moves forward.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testimony Other:** Developing the two streamlined comprehensive programs is reinventing the wheel; there are already numerous options around the state for attaining a math or science certification and the money should not be spent on this but instead on additional scholarships. The grants and donations received by the advisory board should be able to go to any institution that prepares teachers, not just the two comprehensive programs that would be created by this bill.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Senator Craig Pridemore, prime sponsor; John Klacik, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educator Standards Board; Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Leslie Heizer Newquist, Center of Excellence for Careers in Ed/Green River Community College; Gary King, Washington Education Association; Leslie Goldstein, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

OTHER: Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.