

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1374

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to the admission to practice examination for teacher candidates.

Brief Description: Authorizing rules to adopt fees for the teacher admission to practice examination.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Brough and Peery.)

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, March 2, 1993, DPS;
House Second Reading, March 9, 1993;
Passed House, March 10, 1993, 97-0;
Amended by Senate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Dorn, Chair; Cothorn, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle; Carlson; G. Cole; Eide; G. Fisher; Hansen; Holm; Jones; Karahalios; J. Kohl; Patterson; Pruitt; Roland; Stevens; and Vance.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: In 1987, the Washington State Legislature created a requirement that teacher certification candidates pass an examination before receiving an initial teaching certificate. The exam requirement is to take effect on August 31, 1993.

The examination is to test knowledge and competence in subjects including, but not limited to, instructional skills, classroom management, and student behavior and development. The examination is required to consist primarily of essay questions.

No funds were appropriated for developing and administering the exam. As a result, the State Board of Education solicited proposals from testing companies to develop and

administer the test, with certification applicants paying a fee to cover the cost of the exam.

Prior to awarding the contract, however, the attorney general's office concluded that the state board did not have the legislative authority to charge applicants for taking the test.

In addition, the Governor's Council on Education Reform and Funding has recommended that certification requirements for teachers be more performance-based.

Summary of Bill: The current teacher examination, which is to be implemented in August 1993, is postponed until August 31, 1995. In addition, it is broadened to be an individual assessment instead of an examination using primarily essay questions. Also, the assessment is expanded to include the testing of oral and written language skills, the assessment of students, and other knowledge, skills and attributes needed to successfully assist students in achieving mastery of the essential learning requirements.

The State Board of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) are given the authority to charge applicants for the test and to hire a contractor to develop and administer the assessment.

Fee revenues shall be deposited in a revolving fund.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S): The Senate amendment strikes the House bill in its entirety, and repeals the requirement that teachers pass an entry-to-practice examination prior to initial certification. The amendment also directs the State Board of Education to report to the Legislature in 1997 whether a teacher examination should be developed.

Fiscal Note: Requested on the substitute March 3, 1993.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The bill will authorize SPI to collect fees for taking the teacher examination. If necessary, the examination can be developed within the next year or so.

Testimony Against: There is not enough time to develop the examination prior to the August 1993 implementation date. The examination should be postponed. In fact, it should be postponed until after the Commission on Student Learning completes its work. A teacher test will discourage individuals from pursuing an education career.

Witnesses: Richard Allan, National Evaluation Systems (supported original bill); Robert D. McKercher, Jr. (opposed teacher testing); Susan Patrick, Superintendent of Public Instruction (supports original bill, but concerned about implementation date); Judy Hartmann, Washington Education Association (concerns); and Marcia Costello, Washington Association of School Administrators (concerned that the implementation date in original bill needs to be delayed).

VOTE ON FINAL PASSAGE:

Yeas 97; Excused 1

Excused: Representative Wineberry