

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2432

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to educator internship programs.

Brief Description: Changing educator internship programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Hickel, Johnson, Cole, O'Brien and Talcott; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/27/98, 2/3/98 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Johnson, Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Linville; Quall; Smith; Sterk; Talcott and Veloria.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background: As part of education reform, the 1993 Legislature created two administrator internship programs. One program supports candidates who are embarking on a program to become principals. The other program supports candidates who are trying to become superintendents or program administrators. The programs fund release time for school district employees who are enrolled in an administrator preparation program that requires completion of a 45-day internship with a mentor administrator. Candidates must apply to their local school district for an internship. Each school district submits the names of internship applicants to its educational service district (ESD). The ESD, with an advisory board, selects the participants. The ESDs distribute program funding through a statutory allocation process.

Prior to the 1997-99 biennium, the programs funded about 170 interns a year. The 1997 Legislature did not provide specific funding for the programs in the 1997-99 biennial budget. The budget shifted an equal amount of funding into the Block Grant program for school districts. According to a report from the Association of Washington School Principals, participation in the programs has declined significantly. Colleges and universities have reported that almost no interns are supported for the 45 days permitted

in statute. A few interns are receiving support for up to 20 days. The association is asking the 1998 Legislature to revise certain laws governing the programs and to restore categorical funding for them.

Summary of Bill:

PRINCIPAL INTERNSHIPS

The law that governs the Washington State Principal Internship Support program is revised. Participants in the program must agree to four new conditions. Participants must agree to seek employment in the state once they have achieved certification as principals. They must also agree to participate in training activities to improve education and to contribute to activities that improve education in the schools in which they are serving as interns. Finally, they must participate in evaluations of the internship program.

Principal interns will be selected by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) rather than the ESDs. SPI will be assisted by an advisory board that includes principals and representatives of higher education. When selecting participants, SPI will give a priority to candidates who intend to serve as building administrators in schools which have had difficulty finding qualified building administrators.

Funding for the internships will be distributed directly to participating school districts by SPI, rather than being allocated to schools by the ESDs through a statutory formula. SPI may retain up to 7 percent of the program funds to cover the agency's implementation costs.

SUPERINTENDENT AND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR INTERNSHIPS

The law that governs the Washington State Superintendent and Program Administrator Internship Support Program is revised. Participants must agree to seek employment in the state once they have achieved certification as superintendents or program administrators. They must also agree to participate in training activities to improve education and to contribute to activities that improve education in the schools in which they are serving as interns. Finally, they must participate in evaluations of the internship program.

Interns will be selected by SPI rather than the ESDs. SPI will be assisted by an advisory board that includes superintendents, program administrators, and representatives of higher education.

Funding for the internships will be distributed directly to participating schools districts by SPI, rather than being allocated to schools by the ESDs through a statutory formula.

SPI may retain up to 7 percent of the program funds to cover the agency's implementation costs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 1998.

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

Testimony For: The principal internship program is arguably the most important on-the-job training opportunity available to teachers and other educational professionals who are completing their required principal credentials. The success of the education reform initiative requires strong partnerships among teachers, parents and administrators. Principals need to be trained in ways to facilitate these partnerships. The release time funded through this program allows teachers to job shadow mentors during times when students are present and problems arise and are promptly dealt with. This legislation will simplify the administration of the program and assure that participants will serve as principals in the state once they achieve their credentials. Supporters of this legislation hope that its passage, coupled with restoration of specific funding for the administrator internship programs, will restore and strengthen the strong model programs the state has supported for a number of years.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Hickel, prime sponsor; Margaret Davis, City University; Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals; Robert Butts, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Stephen Rushing, principal; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators; Karen Owen, Olympia School District; Julee Durham, Tumwater School District; and Greg Rayl, Tenino School District.