

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6407

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As of February 2, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to teacher assessment for certification.

**Brief Description:** Establishing teacher assessments for certification.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wood, Kohl, Bauer, Patterson, B. Sheldon, Winsley and Oke; by request of Board of Education.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 2/5/98.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Generally, a person teaching in a public or approved private school in Washington State must have a teaching certificate. Applicants for teacher certificates must meet certain requirements, including completion of a teacher preparation program.

To enter into a teacher preparation program, a person must demonstrate competency in the basic skills of reading, oral and written communication, and computation. Competency may be demonstrated in a variety of ways:

- by passing a basic skills exam;
- by completing a baccalaureate or graduate degree program;
- by completing two years of college-level courses and a written essay; or
- by scoring higher than the statewide median score on an approved general achievement test.

In 1995 and 1996, the Legislature directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to study, report and make recommendations regarding assessments for admission to teacher preparation programs and for teacher certification (Chapter 222, Laws of 1995 and Chapter 309, Laws of 1996). The SBE published a consolidated report in January of 1997. One of the recommendations made by the SBE is that the basic skills, teaching skills and subject knowledge of candidates for teacher certification should be assessed.

**Summary of Bill:** The Legislature makes a number of findings about the importance of improving Washington's system of teacher preparation and certification.

The State Board of Education (SBE) is directed to assess the knowledge and abilities of all applicants for teaching certificates in the following areas and on the following timelines:

- reading, writing, communications and mathematics, by September 1, 1999;

- knowledge of teaching, including the skills and theory necessary to be an effective teacher, by September 1, 2000;
- knowledge for specific teaching endorsements, by September 1, 2001.

The SBE and the Superintendent of Public Instruction may contract for the development, purchase, administration, scoring, and reporting of the assessments. Prior to implementing the assessments, the SBE must submit the proposed assessments to the House and Senate Committees on Education for review. The SBE determines the minimum assessment score necessary to achieve a teaching certificate and endorsements.

The applicants for teacher certification must pay a fee to take the certification assessments. The fees must be "reasonably related" to the costs of implementing the assessments. Fee revenues must be deposited into a new account and expended to implement the assessments.

The SBE must report biennially on the success rate of candidates who take the assessments. The report must be available at the state library.

The current minimum qualifications necessary to enter a teacher preparation program are repealed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 30, 1998.

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