

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2957

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to principal assessment and support.

Brief Description: Providing for principal assessment and support.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Talcott, Quall, Miloscia, D. Schmidt, Wensman, Rockefeller, Conway, Lantz and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/1/00, 2/3/00 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- The Principal Competency and Support Program is created to help new principals and principal candidates with their first years on the job and to provide a structured process designed to help them improve their skills and achieve professional certification.
- The process will include an assessment, a professional growth plan, and mentorships provided by skilled and experienced principals.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Schindler, Republican Vice Chair; Carlson; Cox; Keiser; Rockefeller; Santos; D. Schmidt; Schual-Berke; Stensen; Thomas and Wensman.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By law, principals must achieve state certification. Initial or provisional certification lasts for three years. In order to achieve permanent or professional certification, a principal must meet criteria adopted by the State Board of Education. The board is in the process of implementing competency based requirements for professional certification.

The state funds several programs designed to assist persons seeking various forms of educator certification. One of the programs was created in 1993 as part of the state's education reform efforts. Through the program, persons training to become principals may receive internships that help prepare them for initial certification. The internship program is funded through the state budget. Through another state-funded program created in 1984, beginning teachers may receive mentoring and assistance from experienced teachers. The state does not support similar assistance programs for new school principals or superintendents.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Through a contract with a qualified independent organization, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will implement the Principal Competency and Support Program. The program will help new school principals and principal candidates to develop and implement individualized professional growth plans and to achieve professional certification. The program will include three required components. First, the program will include a competency based assessment that measures leadership and managerial skills. Second, the program will require the development of individualized professional growth plans. Finally, the program will include assistance for one to three years for new principals and principal candidates. The assistance will be provided by mentor principals who will help their new colleagues build any skills necessary to successfully complete a professional growth plan.

The program expires on July 1, 2006.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The emergency clause is removed.

Appropriation: The sum of \$250,000 for the 1999-01 biennium is appropriated to OSPI for the purposes of this act.

Fiscal Note: None.

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

Testimony For: School principals play an essential role in the state's efforts to improve student achievement, and some believe that they have the toughest job in the educational system. The state is developing a critical shortage of highly qualified principals, a shortage already evident at the high school level. The first three years on the job can make or break new principals. These principals have a broad spectrum of administrative and leadership responsibilities. Yet much of the time they carry out these responsibilities in isolation. Their national association has developed assessment tools that will help new principals hone the skills they need to be successful school leaders. The implementation of professional growth plans as proposed in the legislation will help new principals understand their own strengths and weaknesses. They can build upon strengths while working to improve those areas in which they are weaker. Although the proposed program is a good one, the legislature might wish to consider whether its administration should be assigned to a professional standards board if one is created.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Kathy Haigh, prime sponsor; Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals; Gary King, Washington Education Association; and Ken Kanikeberg, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.