

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2443

Title: An act relating to tuition assistance for public school teachers required to take college courses to continue teaching and public school classified instructional staff seeking teacher certification.

Brief Description: Providing tuition assistance for public school teachers required to take college courses to continue teaching and classified instructional staff seeking teacher certification.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Ballasiotes, Quall, Dickerson, Haigh, Cox, Edwards, Santos, Kenney, Edmonds, G. Chandler, Lantz, Clements, Stensen, Romero, Lovick, Wensman, Kastama, Kessler, Regala, Cody, Conway, Mulliken, Cooper, Van Luven, Ogden, Kagi, Ruderman, Murray, Linville, Rockefeller, Wood, Hurst and Benson.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: January 24, 2000

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background: Washington provides two levels of certification for teachers. An initial teaching certificate is valid for four years, and may be renewed for an additional three years if certain conditions are met. A continuing certificate is valid in perpetuity as long as the teacher completes 150 clock hours of study every five years, or its equivalent in academic credit, and does not break any laws that lead to revocation. In order to receive a continuing certificate, a teacher must meet four conditions. First, the teacher must obtain a master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or complete 45 quarter credit hours or their equivalent of upper division or graduate level college course work. The teacher must obtain at least 180 days of teaching experience, including 30 days in one school district. Finally, until August 31, 2000, the teacher must obtain two endorsements, and complete course work on issues of abuse.

During the 2000-2001 academic year, tuition and fee rates for state colleges and universities may vary by institution. If each institution used its entire tuition setting authority, credit hour rates for undergraduate courses would range from a low of about \$55 per credit in the community colleges to a high of about \$122 per credit at the two research universities. Tuition and fee rates for graduate level courses would vary from about \$152 per credit at the comprehensive institutions to more than \$270 per credit at the two research universities. Courses offered during the summer are not state supported, so tuition rates for those courses may vary more dramatically. The state's salary schedule recognizes in 15 credit increments the additional educational credits earned by certificated instructional staff. Annual salary increases for additional blocks of credit range from 2.6 percent to 8.3 percent.

Summary: Under certain conditions, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction will reimburse public school teachers and classified instructional staff for the costs of courses taken at regionally accredited colleges and universities. Teachers may receive reimbursement for courses taken to meet the state's continuing certification requirements. Classified instructional staff may receive reimbursement for courses taken to obtain a teaching certificate. Each must apply to the office for reimbursement, and must receive a grade of B- or better, or a pass- in a pass-fail course in order to receive any money. The amount each applicant may receive is limited to the average tuition rates at the state's public baccalaureate institutions. When a classified instructional staff person who receives tuition reimbursement completes a teaching certificate, the office may seek to recover the reimbursed amounts if the staff does not teach in the public schools for at least two years within the ensuing five year period.

The office's administrative responsibilities and the documentation that each applicant must provide are described.

Appropriation:

Fiscal Note:

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