

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5695

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to high-quality alternative routes to teacher certification.

Brief Description: Creating alternative routes to teacher certification.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Eide, Finkbeiner, McAuliffe, Franklin, Hewitt, Rasmussen, Johnson, Shin, Patterson, Oke, Winsley and Kohl-Welles; by request of Governor Locke and Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/22/01, 3/29/01 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- Creates two new alternative routes to teacher certification through mentored internships that provide college graduates who do not have teaching degrees with a chance to become teachers after working for a year with experienced educators.
- Creates a new route to teacher certification for classified school employees with community college associate degrees who work with special education or bilingual students.
- Provides stipends for the mentor teachers and stipends and conditional scholarships for interns.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Anderson, Republican Vice Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Ericksen, Keiser, McDermott, Pearson, Rockefeller, Santos, D. Schmidt and Schual-Berke.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Cox and Schindler.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By law, Washington’s public and private school teachers must hold valid teaching certificates provided by the state. The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes and enforces the rules for those certificates. Applicants for teacher certification must have completed state-approved college or university teacher preparation programs, hold appropriate degrees and licenses, and complete any additional course work required by the SBE.

A person who does not have a teaching certificate may teach in public schools under limited circumstances. The SBE issues instructional specialist certificates to persons of unusual distinction or exceptional talent in a particular field. The board also issues conditional certificates to persons who are highly qualified and experienced in the subject matter to be taught and temporary permits to individuals who are waiting for documentation of proof of completing normal certification requirements. Each of these certificates are temporary and carry restrictions.

In 2000 the Legislature created the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to advise and provide recommendations on issues affecting educators. The PESB was also given a specific charge to provide recommendations for at least two high-quality alternative routes to teacher certification by December 1, 2000. The PESB submitted recommendations for three alternative routes, including recommendations for funding support and implementation.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A statewide Partnership Grant program and the Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship program are created to support three alternative routes for teacher certification. Each route focuses on increasing the number of teachers in shortage and high need areas due to subject matter or geographic location.

Eligibility for Alternative Route One. The teacher candidate must meet the following requirements:

- seek an endorsement in special education, bilingual education, or English as a second language;
- be a classified instructional staff person with three years of experience in that role;
- have an transferable associate degree;

- meet the age, good moral character, and personal fitness requirements for teachers;
- pass the statewide basic skills exams, when available.

Eligibility for Alternative Route Two. The teacher candidate must meet the following requirements:

- seek an endorsement in a state identified subject or geographic shortage area;
- be a classified instructional staff person with three years of experience in that role;
- have a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
- pass the state basic skills and content tests once they are available;
- meet the age, good moral character, and personal fitness requirements for teachers;
- pass the statewide basic skills exams, when available.

Eligibility for Alternative Route Three. The teacher candidate must meet the following requirements:

- seek an endorsement in either a state identified subject matter shortage area or in a subject that is taught in middle school, junior high, or high school, with priority given to candidates in subject matter shortage areas;
- have five years experience in the work force and not be currently employed in the school district;
- have a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
- demonstrate successful experiences with students or children (which may be shown by letters of reference);
- meet the age, good moral character, and personal fitness requirements for teachers;
- pass the statewide basic skills and content exams, when available.

Partnership Grant Program: To the extent funds are provided for this purpose, school districts may partner with the regional educational service district and higher education teachers' preparation programs to provide one or more of the three alternative route programs. Each of the alternative route programs must provide a full-time mentor in the classroom with the teacher candidate until the candidate demonstrates competency necessary to manage the classroom with part-time supervision and guidance from the mentor. At the completion of the program, successful candidates will be eligible for teacher certification. The programs may enroll candidates beginning in January 2002.

School districts may apply for grant funds to be used for stipends for the teacher candidates and the mentors by submitting a proposal to the PESB. Using specified criteria, the PESB, with support from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, will select the districts to receive the partnership grants. The amount of the grant will not exceed money generated by the BA+0 cell on the state salary schedule.

Interns will receive at least 80 percent of the stipend amount.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy must evaluate the Partnership Grant program and submit to the PESB an interim evaluation by December 1, 2002, and a final evaluation by September 1, 2005.

Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program: To the extent funds are provided, the PESB will award conditional scholarships to participants in any of the alternative routes. The scholarship award covers up to \$4,000 of the tuition cost for the alternative route in which the recipient is enrolled. The conditional scholarship provides one year of loan forgiveness in exchange for two years of teaching in a Washington public school. If the recipient fails to teach in a Washington public school, then the individual must repay the scholarship with interest.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is authorized to adopt rules, collect and manage repayments, and accept grants and donations for the conditional scholarship program.

The Partnership Grant program and the Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship program expire June 30, 2005.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:

The maximum amount of funding for stipends is clarified; the training program for interns is clarified; scholarships are available to all participants; requirements for route three participants are revised; route one participants are permitted to seek a bilingual endorsement; the language on conditional scholarships is clarified; the roles of the mentor teacher and higher education partner are clarified; and a null and void clause is added to the evaluation requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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

Testimony For: The state is facing a teacher shortage in several vital areas, including mathematics and science. In some areas of the country, the shortage of math and science teachers has become so acute that school districts are recruiting teachers from India. In this state, there are a number of individuals with mathematics and science degrees who wish to become teachers, but don't have the time or financial resources to return to

college for the one to three years it would take to obtain an education degree. This legislation provides an opportunity for these and other experienced professionals to become teachers without going back to college. Through paid internships, it will partner second career professionals with experienced teachers who can help the professionals acquire the instructional and classroom management skills necessary to become effective educators. In the process, it will help Washington fill open teaching positions in subjects that have a shortage of qualified teachers. It will also provide a way for classified staff to become teachers and for school districts to "grow their own teachers."

(Concerns with original bill) The legislation does not include some desirable clarifications included in its house companion. It also blurs the distinction between the opportunities available in routes two and three.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educators Standards Board; Kristin Bunce, Governor's Office; Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Renee Radcliff, Advancing the Business of Technology; Gary King, Washington Education Association; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association; Loretta Seppanen, State Board on Community and Technical Colleges; and Larry Davis, State Board of Education.