
Education Committee

HB 1190

Brief Description: Changing provisions for classified staff in alternative certification programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Tom, Grant, Talcott, Benson, Ahern, Shabro, Lovick, Dunshee, Anderson, Delvin, McCoy, Cody, Miloscia, Eickmeyer, Mielke, Linville, Pearson, Kessler, Cairnes and Mastin.

Hearing Date: 1/29/03

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

The 2001 legislature, at the recommendation of the Professional Educator Standards Board, created three alternative routes to prepare new teachers for subjects and geographic locations in which there are a shortage of qualified educators.

The first route was limited to para-educators who hold an Associate of Arts degree. In order to qualify for the program, these para-educators had to seek an endorsement to teach in special education, bilingual education or English as a second language. Participants in this route could take two years to complete the program.

The second route was a one year certification program limited to public school classified staff. These students had to hold a baccalaureate degree and seek certification in an identified subject or geographic shortage area.

Route three was a one year program limited to persons outside the public school system. These participants were required to have five years of work experience, a baccalaureate degree and a demonstrated ability to work with children or students.

Participants in all three routes were also required to meet background record checks and to pass the subject matter tests developed by the Professional Educator Standards Board. The one year certification programs were developed as partnerships between one or more school districts and a higher education partner. The majority of the education was to take place in a K-12 classroom under the direction of a mentor teacher, with higher education helping to fill in the gaps a student needed.

The participants were eligible to receive 80 percent of a beginning teacher's salary (about \$22,500). The remaining funds were to go to the district and the mentor teacher.

School districts do not have a uniform policy for determining the employee status of para-educators and classified staff in the program. In some but not all districts, para-educators and classified staff lose their health and pension benefits when they enter the program.

Summary of Bill:

Para-educators and classified staff in routes one and two of the alternative certification program will retain their employee status while enrolled in the program. Para-educators in route one may retain that status for a maximum of two years. Classified staff in route two may retain it for a maximum of one year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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