

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6052

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to alternative route teacher certification.

Brief Description: Changing alternative route teacher certification provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Johnson and Rossi; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 4/22/03 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Increases the conditional scholarships for the Alternative Routes to Certification Program from \$4,000 to \$8,000 and makes them available to all participants in the program.
- Eliminates stipends for interns in the Alternative Routes to Certification Program.
- Provides a \$500 stipend for mentors of interns.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cox, DeBolt, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Miloscia, Pflug, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Sump and Talcott.

Staff: Denise Graham (786-7137).

Background:

The 2001 Legislature, at the recommendation of the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), 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 is 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 is 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.

The third route is 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 PESB. The one-year certification programs were developed as partnerships between one or more school districts and an institution of higher education. 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.

Classified staff in routes one and two are also eligible to receive \$4,000 conditional scholarships to help pay for any tuition charged by the higher education partners in the program. The conditional scholarships may be repaid through service in a public school. Route three participants are not included in the conditional scholarship program.

\$1,916,000 was appropriated to support the program during the 2003 fiscal year.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Districts may apply for funds through the Partnership Grant program to pay stipends to trained teachers who mentor interns in the program. The mentor's stipend amount is limited to \$500 for each intern the teacher mentors. Interns will not receive stipends.

The list of factors that the PESB and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) may use to select participating districts is clarified to be non-exclusive.

Interns under the third route become eligible to receive conditional scholarships. The total scholarship amount is increased from \$4,000 to \$8,000.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill clarifies the selection process for interns and the program administration responsibility of the Professional Educator Standard Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The current program is very successful, having produced 163 newly certificated teachers in the last year. A similar program, funded through a federal grant, proved equally successful but cost far less for each new teacher. That program limited support to \$8,000 for each participant. The PESB had 583 applicants for 63 federally funded slots. Given that experience, the PESB recommends the elimination of stipends and their replacement with a conditional scholarship of \$8,000 for each intern in the state program.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jennifer Wallace, Executive Director, Professional Educator Standards Board.