

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5238

As of January 31, 2003

Title: An act relating to classified staff in alternative certification programs.

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

Sponsors: Senators Schmidt, McAuliffe, Carlson, Roach, Esser and Eide.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/4/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

Background: In 2000, the Legislature created the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (WPESB) to advise and provide recommendations on issues affecting educators. WPESB submitted recommendations for three alternative routes to teacher certification and recommendations for funding support and implementation of those routes.

In 2001, the Legislature created a statewide Partnership Grant program and the Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship program 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.

Route one is available to paraeducators with a transferable associate degree who are seeking teacher certification with endorsements in special education or English as a second language. Route one certification takes two years or less. Route two is available to classified staff with a bachelors' degree who are seeking teacher certification in subject matter shortage areas, and areas with shortages due to geographic location. Route two certification takes one year or less. Route three is available to individuals with bachelor's degrees who are seeking residency teacher certification in subject matter shortage areas, other than special education or English as a second language or shortages due to geographic location. Route three certification takes one year or less. Each route sets out its own parameters on what a candidate must complete in order to gain certification.

Currently, some districts allow paraeducators or classified staff that are pursuing either route one or two certification to maintain their employment status while pursuing their certification. Other districts do not. Allowing an employee to maintain their employment status allows the individual to remain eligible for health care and pension benefits.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A school district must allow a route one or two candidate to retain his or her employee status for up to two years during the time that the candidate is participating in the route one or two program.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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