

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5240

As Passed Senate, March 6, 2003

Title: An act relating to including a classified employee on the Washington professional educator standards board.

Brief Description: Including a classified employee on the Washington professional educator standards board.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Zarelli, McAuliffe, Schmidt, Eide, Benton, Carlson, Keiser, Mulliken, Kohl-Welles, Stevens, Winsley, Hale, Roach and Poulsen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/4/03, 2/11/03 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/6/03, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5240 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Johnson, Chair; Zarelli, Vice Chair; Carlson, Eide, Finkbeiner, McAuliffe, Rasmussen and Schmidt.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 2002, the Legislature created the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to advise the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and the State Board of Education on issues related to educators. The PESB is composed of 19 voting members, appointed by the Governor: seven public school teachers, one private school teacher, three representatives of educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education, four school administrators, two educational staff associates, one parent, and one member of the public. Except for the parent and public member, each voting member must be actively employed in the position and have at least three years of experience in Washington schools. Additionally, the SPI is a nonvoting member of the PESB.

Summary of Bill: A classified employee, who assists in public school student instruction, is added as a voting member to the PESB, replacing the "public" member. The classified employee must meet the same criteria as the other members, i.e., actively employed in the position and having at least three years of experience.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on original. Requested on substitute.

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

Testimony For: The PESB is not a teacher's board, neither in its composition nor its issues. PESB members have an interest in the quality of teachers but not all of the members are teachers. Paraeducators have a very strong interest in the quality of teachers because that quality directly affects the paraeducators who work with those teachers. The PESB currently addresses paraeducator issues now; for example, two of the alternative certification routes administered by the PESB are for paraeducators. Paraeducators need to be at the table and to have their voices heard. Concerns: The PESB did hear from a panel of organizations representing paraeducators this last spring and that panel was split on this issue. Based on that presentation and on the belief that the focus of the PESB is on maintaining high standards in the teaching profession, the PESB requests that you keep the current structure of the PESB.

Testimony Against: When you add a member to a board, to fully honor that member, you must address the interests and concerns of that member. That would dilute the focus of the PESB. OSPI has convened an advisory group of relevant stakeholders to address concerns for paraeducators raised by the new requirements of the new federal law. That is the appropriate place for the concerns to be addressed or perhaps another board would be appropriate.

Testified: Jennifer Wallace, Prof. Ed. Standards Board (concerns); Doug Nelson, PSE (pro); Greg Williamson, OSPI; Gary King, WEA (con).