

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6245

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 3, 2004

Title: An act relating to residency teacher certification partnership programs.

Brief Description: Relating to residency teacher certification partnership programs.

Sponsors: Senators Zarelli, Regala, Winsley and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 1/28/04, 2/3/04 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6245 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 2001, the Legislature created 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. Routes one and two are available to classified instructional employees who are employed by a school district. Route three is available to people who are not employed by the school district, but may have an emergency substitute certification. There are additional eligibility requirements for each route.

The educational program for the different alternative certification routes vary based on the existing education level of the candidate. Route one candidates, who have an associate degree, must complete their baccalaureate degree and a mentored internship. Route two candidates, who already have a baccalaureate degree, must complete a mentored internship and training and coursework offered at a local site in collaboration with a higher education institution. Route three candidates, who have a baccalaureate degree, must attend an intensive summer teaching academy, followed by a full year of employment by a school district in a mentored internship (and, if necessary, a second summer academy).

A partnership grant program and a conditional scholarship program which support the alternative route certification program have been funded by the Legislature since the creation of the alternative certification program. The partnership grant program provides funds to participating districts to assist the district in partnering with higher education teacher preparation programs and may be used to provide stipends to the mentor teacher. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), with support from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, selects the districts that receive the funds based on a list

of factors included in the statute. The PESB selects teacher candidates to receive conditional scholarships but the program is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The alternate teacher certification program expires June 30, 2005.

Under the 2001 federal No Child Left Behind Act, beginning in 2005, all teachers who teach in core academic subjects (English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography) must be "highly qualified." "Highly qualified" means that the teacher has full certification (not an emergency or limited certificate) and has passed a state test or demonstrates competence based on an objective uniform standard of evaluation.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A fourth alternative route for teacher certification is created. Route four is available to people who are employed in the district, hold a baccalaureate degree and hold a conditional teaching certificate or emergency substitute certificate. Eligibility for individuals who hold an emergency substitute certificate is changed from route three to route four. Additional eligibility requirements are provided. The educational program for route four candidates consists of an intensive summer teacher academy, followed by a full year employed by a school district in a mentored internship.

Partnership grants are available to districts that operate a route four program and conditional scholarships are available to route four teacher certification candidates.

The expiration date for the program is repealed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Other alternative certification statutes are amended to fully complete the change from three to four routes. Clarification is made that the focus of route four is not to address shortages of teachers in subject or geographic areas. It is clarified that the mentor of the teacher candidate in routes three and four makes the decision when the teacher candidate is ready to manage the classroom with less supervision. When the alternative certification program was originally created it was to expire June 30, 2005. That expiration is repealed. The evaluation of the program by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, which is due by December 1, 2004, still expires June 30, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This new route will help teachers currently teaching under a conditional teaching certificate meet the requirements to become fully certificated in order to comply with the federal law. Most of these teachers have practical experience in their field which students find to be a valuable asset. Students and parents do not want these teachers to be replaced just because the replacement teacher has a certain kind of certification but has less relevant experience.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Michael Jones, Alternative Certification Program intern; Pat Philipp Alternative Certification Program intern; Jennifer Wallace, PESB; Jose Mata, Citizens for

Educ. Excellence (CEE); Deb Mata, CEE; Randy Hathaway, WSPA; Erin Moore, student; Tara Ramadan, student; Douglas Sessions, Friends of the Arts.