

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2212

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to educator certification.

Brief Description: Relating to educator certification.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/28/05, 3/1/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Transfers from the State Board of Education to the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) rulemaking for professional certification for teachers and approval for the preparation programs leading to the certification.
- Requires the PESB to review and report on the preparation programs leading to professional certification.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Santos, Shabro and Tom.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

The State Board of Education (SBE) adopts rules for the certification of educators and educational administrators, with advice from the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). The rules are then implemented by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

The board has adopted a two-tier certification system for new teachers. The first tier, which is granted upon completion of an approved college teacher preparation program that leads to a baccalaureate or graduate degree, is called a residency certificate. This certificate is valid for five years. The second tier certificate is now called a professional certificate. Beginning with September 1, 2000, all beginning teachers and most experienced teachers from out-of-state

must earn the professional certificate within five years of obtaining a residency certificate. A two-year extension may be granted if the candidate is making progress toward the professional certificate.

This process is very different from that of the previously required continuing certificate in many significant ways. The professional certificate is performance-based as opposed to earning 45 credits beyond the bachelor's degree. It relies heavily on the production of school/classroom-based performance indicators that are evaluated by members of the teacher's professional growth team.

Professional growth team means a team comprised of the candidate, a colleague specified by the candidate, a college or university advisor, and a representative from the school district in which the candidate teaches.

During the interim, several legislators met with groups of teachers to discuss the new requirements. Although it is working well for some candidates, for others the requirements have faced unresolved challenges that include wide variations in the quality, relevance, and cost of different certification programs.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The PESB will review college preparation programs that lead to professional certification. The review will include required coursework, links to school improvement and teacher professional growth plans, and program costs. The review will also include a survey of participants and, beginning in 2008, the impact on student achievement of educators who have obtained the certification. The PESB will report the results of its review on December 1, 2005 and December 1 of each odd-numbered year thereafter. The report will include the PESB's findings by institution, a summary of improvement plans, exemplary practices, and plans for agency assistance to college programs.

The responsibility for adopting rules is transferred from the SBE to the PESB for professional certification and for the approval of preparation programs leading to that certification. The rules will:

- require professional certification no earlier than the 2006-07 school year or the fifth year following the candidate's receipt of a continuing contract;
- permit maximum choice, promote portability, minimize paperwork, and link requirements to student learning and achievement;
- allow teachers who began a professional certification program before June 30, 2005, to continue the program under the rules that were in place when the teacher began the program;
- permit out-of-state teachers with five or more years of recent teaching experience to begin teaching with a professional certificate if the teachers can show evidence that they engaged in professional development during their teaching careers (the out-of-state teachers may be required to take a class in or show evidence that they can teach to the state's essential academic learning requirements);

- design and pilot a program that permits an educational service district to be the lead partner in a professional certification preparation program;
- explore low cost or no cost program options, and options for lapsed certificates;
- notify teachers and school districts six months before a certificate lapses; and
- implement an annual evaluation process for approved programs.

The staff responsible for professional certification are transferred from the OSPI to the PESB.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: the original was a title only bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: (In support) The new process for professional certification leaves some teachers and administrators confused and frustrated. The process is intended to be performance-based but many participants are experiencing it as one of jumping through hoops, doing busy work, and paying huge tuition charges for work that doesn't improve teaching or learning. College programs leading to professional certification vary dramatically in quality, cost, and relevance. It is time to delay the professional certification requirement and allow the colleges time to refine their programs to meet the goals of professional certification. It is also time to move the responsibility for educator certification to the PESB, a board that has done an excellent job with the Alternative Routes to Certification program. This legislation begins to address the problems with the current requirement. It is important to make the certification process work as it was intended and this bill is a step in the right direction.

(Concerns) Colleges and universities should be the only agencies that may nominate candidates for professional certification. The legislation should include a stipend of at least \$3,500 for teachers who earn professional certification. It may take more time than is allotted here to do a thorough review of college professional certification programs. Splitting authority between the PESB and the SBE on certification and program approval could be a problem. In addition, the state needs to be careful to send a consistent message that performance-based certification is here to stay.

Testimony Against: While some problems with the professional certification process have been identified, the OSPI and the colleges are working diligently and quickly to address them. They have already met once and will meet again every two to three weeks during the spring to improve the quality of the programs that lead to certification. They are also looking at ways to create low cost options for participants. This legislation is unnecessary since the SBE can change its rules to address some of the implementation issues that have been raised,

and plans, in March, to adopt a rule change that will ease the timelines for candidates. Finally, the governance change contemplated in this legislation is unnecessary.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Hunter, prime sponsor; Jeanne Harman, Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession; and Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

(Concerns) Jennifer Wallace, Washington Professional Educators Standards Board; Megan Atkinson and Mary Jo Larsen, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals.

(Opposed) Larry Davis, State Board of Education; and Dan Bishop, Seattle Pacific University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.