

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2989

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Education

Title: An act relating to establishing the Washington teach math-science program to increase the number and enhance the preparation of secondary school mathematics and science teachers.

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington Teach Math-Science program.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Cox, Sells, Chase, Ericks, Hasegawa, Takko, Haler, Rodne, Hunter, Quall, McCoy, Santos, Green, Schual-Berke, Springer, Dickerson, Simpson and Hudgins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education & Workforce Education: 1/27/06, 1/31/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Provides for additional scholarships under the Conditional Teachers' Scholarship Program and the Alternative Route Certification Conditional Scholarship Program for students who commit to teaching secondary math or science.
- Creates the Washington Teach Math-Science Program, which is intended to provide a streamlined curriculum to allow students to earn a bachelor's degree and residency certification in secondary math or science within four academic years.
- Creates an advisory committee to obtain grants and donations for the program created and to identify and develop professional development opportunities.
- Creates the Washington Teach Math-Science Professional Development Account in the custody of the State Treasurer.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Fromhold, Hasegawa, Jarrett, Ormsby, Priest, Roberts and Sommers.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Dunn.

Staff: Sarah Ream (786-7303).

Background:

Conditional Scholarships: In 1987, Washington created the Conditional Teachers' Scholarship Program administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). Recipients received scholarships for up to five years in the form of a loan. Loan repayment was forgiven at a rate of one year of repayment for every two years the recipient taught in a K-12 public school in Washington. The Legislature provided funding of \$300,000 per year for the program until 1994.

In 2004, the Conditional Teachers' Scholarship Program was reactivated and a conditional loan repayment component was added. The program now provides priority for participants seeking certification or additional endorsement in math, science, technology, or special education. The program's selection criteria also emphasize bilingual ability and a willingness to commit to providing teaching service in shortage areas. "Shortage area" means a shortage of teachers in a specific subject, discipline, or geographic area as defined by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The scholarship amount awarded is the amount of tuition and fees paid by the participant, with a maximum equal to resident undergraduate tuition and fees at the University of Washington. Scholarship recipients who teach in a shortage area have one year of conditional scholarship forgiven for every year of teaching. All other recipients have one year forgiven for every two years of teaching. Recipients who fail to meet the teaching service obligation must repay the scholarship plus interest.

The loan repayment component of the program allows the HECB to agree to repay a student's federal student loans in exchange for teaching service. Each year, participants must provide evidence of teaching service in order to receive a loan repayment. The HECB may pay the participant directly or arrange to pay the holder of the student loan. The selection criteria, repayment limits, and ratio of loan repayment to required teaching service are the same as for the conditional scholarship program.

For 2005-06, there were 357 applicants for 69 awards. Of these awards, 45 were conditional scholarships and 24 were through the conditional loan repayment program.

Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program: The Legislature has created four 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 have an emergency substitute certification. Route four is available to district employees who have a baccalaureate degree, and hold a conditional teaching certificate or emergency substitute certificate.

Since its creation in 2001, the Legislature has funded a Conditional Teachers' Scholarship Program that supports the alternative route certification. In the 2005-06 school year, there are

109 people participating in the alternative route program. Of these, 93 received conditional scholarships.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Washington Teach Math-Science Program is created. The program has four components: (1) teacher preparation programs; (2) a public-private advisory committee; (3) targeted conditional scholarships and loan repayments; and (4) targeted alternative routes conditional scholarships and loan repayments.

The HECB and the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) will jointly select two institutions of higher education to develop and implement a comprehensive program to prepare secondary math and science teachers. The programs shall be in place by fall 2007 and must include a streamlined curriculum allowing students to earn a bachelor's degree and residency certification in secondary math or science within four academic years. The program shall also include math recruitment and outreach to prospective students who have expressed an interest in math and science.

The HECB and the PESB shall create an advisory committee of business and community leaders to solicit and accept grants and donations. The committee will identify and develop professional development opportunities for students, including: (1) internships, (2) best practice seminars, (3) mentors and other supports during the first five years of teaching, and (4) summer work experiences for teachers in businesses and industries related to math and science.

Beginning July 1, 2006, the HECB will increase the number of conditional scholarships awarded under the future teachers conditional scholarship and loan repayment program to eligible participants who plan to teach secondary math or science by as many eligible applicants as the appropriation will sustain, with a goal of at least 70 additional awards. Teachers who receive funds for teaching secondary math or science will have one year of the loan cancelled for each year taught in secondary math or science.

Beginning July 1, 2006, the number of alternative route conditional scholarships awarded to eligible participants who plan to teach secondary math or science will be increased by 30 more than were awarded for the 2005-06 school year. For every year a participant teaches math or science in a district with a documented shortage of math or science teachers, one year of his or her loan will be cancelled.

The Washington Teach Math-Science Professional Development Account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. Grants and donations received for authorized professional development opportunities must be deposited into this account. Only the HECB Director or designee may authorize expenditures for professional development opportunities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill provides that the two institutions of higher education selected by the HECB to participate in the Washington Teach Math-Science Program may partner with community and technical colleges in the development and implementation of the program's requirements. The HECB is directed to award additional conditional scholarships and/or loan repayments to as many eligible applicants who intend to teach math or science as the appropriation will sustain, with a goal of at least 70 additional awards. The original bill required that 70 additional awards be made.

The substitute bill provides that the funding for the conditional scholarships and loan repayments for students in the alternative routes program is appropriated to the Professional Educator Standards Board, rather than to the HECB.

Appropriation: The sum of \$850,000.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (In support of original bill) This bill gives incentives to students to prepare to be math or science teachers. We cannot impose standards in the K-12 system if there are no teachers to teach toward the standards. Having more math teachers should help alleviate the need for remedial math courses. Including the alternative route programs in the bill is good, because the alternative route programs have produced 191 math or science teaching endorsements. Including alternative route students may help increase the number of special education teachers because many of these students teach special education. The applicant pool for the alternative routes program has been three times the number of available spaces. In addition to math and science, there are other shortage areas (e.g., English Language Learners, special education) that need consideration. Remove the term "quality" from the bill, because the quality of teachers is not an issue.

(With concerns to original bill) Conditional scholarships create incentives to attract students to teaching math and science; however, the scholarships should follow the students and should be available for use at any public or private school. The summer work experience for teachers may be valuable to connect teachers to real world experiences, but may cause new teachers to question their career choices. Being able to streamline the curriculum is a function of funding.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support of original bill) Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents; Jennifer Wallace, Professional Education Standards Board; Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and John Klacik, Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(With concerns to original bill) Gary King, Washington Education Association; and Bob Cooper, Washington Association for Colleges of Teacher Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.