

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2830

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to educational staff associates.

Brief Description: Granting service credit to educational staff associates for nonschool employment.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Bailey, Hunter, Schual-Berke, McDermott, Linville and Kagi.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/25/06, 2/1/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, revises the state teacher salary allocation schedule to recognize years of service outside of the school setting for educational staff associates.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Santos, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Sarah Ream (786-7303).

Background:

Through the apportionment process, the state makes payments to school districts for the salaries of basic education certificated instructional staff. Certificated instructional staff include both teachers and other professionals called educational staff associates (ESAs) who meet certification requirements adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE). The ESAs include: (1) occupational therapists; (2) physical therapists; (3) speech-language pathologists; (4) audiologists; (5) nurses; (6) social workers; (7) counselors; and (8) psychologists.

Funding for all certificated instructional staff salaries is based on a state salary allocation schedule that is implemented in the state's biennial operating budget. The salary allocation schedule is used by the state to account for differences in the education and experience of each district's certificated instructional staff.

Under current law, ESAs are included in the statewide salary allocation schedule. This schedule takes into account years of service and educational background. However, the current years of service determination applies only to service in schools (both public and private), but not to service in other non-school positions, such as work in a hospital, physician's office, or counseling center.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning in the 2006-2007 school year, the certificated instructional staff salary allocation schedule will recognize years of professional experience obtained by educational staff associates (ESAs) outside of a school setting. The ESAs included are: school nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, social workers, counselors, and psychologists.

Each year of service outside of the school system will count as one-year of school service on the state salary allocation schedule.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill will help school districts recruit and retain highly qualified educational staff associates (ESAs). Failing to give service credit to ESAs for equivalent work in a non-school setting is a disincentive for qualified professionals to take jobs with schools. The disincentive means that many professional positions simply go unfilled or are filled by staff hired on a contractual basis. This actually costs the school districts more money than hiring ESAs directly. For example, if an ESA is usually paid \$40 per hour, a contract professional will likely cost the district \$60 per hour. Having to hire contract staff also increases districts' administrative costs.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Lovick, prime sponsor; Lonnie Johns-Brown, School Nurse Organization of Washington; Rose Racicot, Washington Occupational Therapy Association; Mark Haddock, Assistant Superintendent Kent School District; Nasne Nishida, Professional Educator Standards Board; and Christie Perkins; Washington State Special Education Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.