

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5983

C 498 L 05

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding professional certification of teachers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Pflug, Schmidt, Esser, Delvin and Benson).

Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education

House Committee on Education

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Under current law, the State Board of Education (SBE) has the authority to approve or disapprove the program of courses leading to teacher, school administrator, and school specialized personnel certification offered by all accredited institutions of higher education in the state. The board must conduct a review every five years of the program approval standards, including the minimum standards for teacher, administrators, and educational staff associates, to reflect research findings and to assure continued improvement in the programs.

The State Board of Education in 1997 adopted rules for the professional certification programs. The rules became effective in 2000. When rules for professional certification were adopted, only institutions of higher education that are approved to offer residency preparation programs for teachers and principals/program administrators were eligible to offer programs leading to professional certification for teachers and principals/program administrators.

The SBE-adopted rules consisting of the establishment of a professional education advisory board for each professional certification preparation program and standards for program approval, program accountability, program resources, program design, and candidate knowledge and skills.

Summary: The agency responsible for educator certification must adopt rules to provide for the approval and disapproval of programs leading to the professional certification of teachers. The rules must be written to allow the maximum program choice for applicants and must promote maximum efficiency for applicants in attaining professional certification. All current and future programs must comply with these rules and must receive initial approval based on these rules.

Under the rules to be written by the agency, professional certification would be required no earlier than the fifth year after the year a teacher completes provisional status, with an automatic two-year extension upon enrollment, and not require any teacher with national board certification to earn a professional certificate. The rules must also allow any teacher currently enrolled in or participating in a program leading to professional certification to continue the program under administrative rules in place when the teacher began the program.

The rules must provide criteria for the approval and disapproval of educational service districts to offer programs leading to professional certification no later than August 31, 2007. The rules must be written to encourage institutions of higher education to partner with local school districts or consortia of school districts, as appropriate, to provide instruction for teachers seeking professional certification. The institutions would also be encouraged to offer professional certificate coursework as continuing education credit hours. This must not prevent an institution of higher education from providing the option of including the professional certification requirements as part of a master's degree program. Criteria must be created to provide for a liaison relationship between approved programs and school districts in which applicants are employed.

The agency must identify an expedited process for out-of-state certificated teachers not yet certificated in Washington to earn professional certification that requires such teachers to demonstrate skills commensurate with Washington's education reform.

An evaluation process of approved programs must be identified that includes a review of the program coursework and applicant coursework load requirements, linkages of programs to individual teacher professional growth plans, linkages to school district and school improvement plans, and, to the extent possible, linkages to school district professional enrichment and growth programs for teachers, where such programs are in place in school districts. The board must identify:

- 1) a process for awarding conditional approval of a program that must include annual evaluations of the program until the program is awarded full approval;
- 2) a three-year less intensive evaluation once a program receives full approval;
- 3) a method for investigating programs that have received numerous complaints from students enrolled in the program and from those recently completing the program; and
- 4) a method for using program completer satisfaction responses in making the evaluation, and includes data on the effect of professional certification on student achievement.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	95	1	(House amended)
Senate	39	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 24, 2005