
Education Committee

HB 2607

Brief Description: Requiring the professional educator standards board to convene a work group regarding English language learner students.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Anderson, Lantz, Hudgins, Upthegrove, Sullivan, Chase, Darneille and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Professional Educator Standards Board to develop recommendations to improve standards for teacher preparation and expected teacher competencies in how to teach English language learner students.

Hearing Date: 1/22/08

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

According to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 76,966 students were enrolled in the Transitional Bilingual Program (TBP) as of April 2007, representing 7.5 percent of total K-12 enrollment. These English language learner (ELL) students spoke 177 different languages, with two-thirds speaking Spanish as their first language.

Just over 10 percent of ELL students receive some form of bilingual education in two languages. The remaining students are served almost equally in one of two models: pull-out tutoring (often by an instructional assistant) or Sheltered English. Sheltered English relies on instruction only in English, primarily by the regular classroom teacher. The ELL students are taught language and academic content along with the rest of the class. According to the OSPI, more schools are adopting the Sheltered English model of instruction.

However, not all teachers have been trained in language acquisition theories or techniques for teaching both ELL students and native speakers at the same time. Legislation enacted in 2007 created a demonstration project for improving ELL instruction. Funding was provided for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) to study the competencies for developing

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academic English skills that all classroom teachers should acquire in initial teacher preparation programs and through professional development. An interim report is due November 1, 2008.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is the state agency with responsibility and authority for policy and oversight of Washington's system of educator preparation and certification.

Summary of Bill:

The PESB must convene a workgroup to develop recommendations to improve the knowledge and skills standards for teacher preparation and expected teacher competencies in how students acquire language, how to teach academic content to ELL students, and cultural competence.

The workgroup includes the Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; school districts with significant numbers of ELL students of a single language and multiple languages; English as a Second Language, Bilingual Education, and classroom teachers; principals; and the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The PESB must invite participation from the NWREL, and the workgroup will be informed by the ELL demonstration projects authorized in 2007 and the NWREL's research and evaluation.

A report from the workgroup is due December 1, 2008.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16th, 2008.

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