

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1226

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 29, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to establishing the first peoples' language, culture, and history teacher certification program.

**Brief Description:** Establishing the first peoples' language, culture, and history teacher certification program.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Sells, Barlow, Santos, Appleton, Lovick, Strow, Hasegawa, Quall, Dunshee, Hunt, McCoy, Priest, Ormsby, Wood, Wallace, Conway, Kenney, VanDeWege, Dickerson, Haigh and Simpson).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/08/07, 71-27.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/19/07, 3/29/07 [DPA, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Tom, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Clements, Eide, Oemig, Rasmussen, Weinstein and Zarelli.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair, Hobbs and Kauffman.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** In 2003, the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a rule establishing a three-year First Peoples' Language/Culture Certification pilot program. SBE's stated purpose for establishing the program included contributing to the preservation, recovery, revitalization, and promotion of First Peoples' languages and providing the opportunity for tribal children to learn and share their language at a public school. In 2005, the Legislature passed legislation transferring authority for educator preparation and certification from SBE to the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). The First Peoples' Language/Culture Certification pilot program was to conclude at the end of the 2005-06 school year. However, in May 2006, the PESB provided a one-year extension of the First Peoples' Language/Culture Certification pilot program. At the January 2007 meeting of PESB, PESB voted to make the pilot program a permanent program. To date, 11 tribal governments have participated in the pilot program. Twenty First Peoples' Language/Culture teacher certificates were awarded addressing eight different tribal languages.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:** The Washington State First Peoples' language, culture, and history teacher certification program is established in statute. The act may be known as the "First Peoples' language, culture and history teacher certification act: Honoring our ancestors." PESB will adopt rules to implement the program in collaboration with sovereign tribal governments that choose to participate. Participating tribal governments may certify individuals who meet the tribe's criteria. Before certifying an individual, the tribal government may conduct a background check through the tribal police departments within Washington State. The tribal government will send to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) the background check information and other information necessary for the individual to receive a state certificate. The individual must be certified by both the tribal government and SPI to teach the languages and cultures designated on the certificate and no other subjects under this certification. Individuals with this certification meet the definition of a "highly qualified teacher" of the federal No Child Left Behind act when teaching First Peoples' language, culture, and history subject to approval by the federal Department of Education. Teaching certificates awarded under the pilot language/culture program remain valid.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED STRIKING AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** History is removed from the certification so that the certification becomes the First Peoples' language and culture teacher certification program. The tribal government is required to conduct a background check through the tribal police departments.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: It is wonderful to see the support for this bill. Under this program, a person will be able to teach the First Peoples' history as enrichment, but not as a core program for credit. We prefer the House version of this bill because it maintains history as part of the certification and it makes the tribal government background check through the tribal police departments permissive instead of mandatory. Learning the language, culture, and history from tribal representatives will help our Native American students find relevance in school, help keep them in school, and help them build positive relationships between and among the Native and non-native students.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Suzi Wright, Tulalip Tribes; Brian Nissen, Collville Tribe; Keri Acker-Peltier Suquamish Tribe.

Signed In, Unable to Testify & Submitted Written Testimony: PRO: Isabel Munoz-Colon, OSPI.