

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5269

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### C 319 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

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

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Delvin, Kauffman, Roach, Franklin, Rasmussen, Kohl-Welles, Sheldon, Marr, Murray, Oemig, Jacobsen, Rockefeller, Shin and Kilmer).

**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**  
**House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs**

**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.

**Summary:** The First Peoples' language, culture, and oral tribal traditions teacher certification program is established in statute. The act may be known as the "First Peoples' language/culture 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. The tribal law enforcement agencies and the Washington State Patrol (WSP) will enter into government-to-government negotiations regarding the exchange of background information on applicants for certification. The tribal government will submit information necessary for the issuance of a state teaching certificate to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). OSPI must conduct a background check through the WSP and the Federal Bureau of Investigation before awarding a state certificate. The individual must be certified by both the tribal government and OSPI.

The certificated individuals may only teach First Peoples' language and culture, and no other

subjects (unless the individual has a state teaching certificate and an endorsement in another subject).

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 and culture, subject to approval by the federal Department of Education. Teaching certificates awarded under the pilot language/culture program remain valid. Schools and school districts are encouraged to contract with tribal governments for approved in-service training or continuing education training in First Peoples' languages and cultures.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	0	
House	70	24	(House amended)
Senate	32	15	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 22, 2007