

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1477

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, March 18, 2011

Title: An act relating to the authority to offer educational specialist degrees.

Brief Description: Authorizing the board of trustees at Eastern Washington University to offer educational specialist degrees.

Sponsors: Representatives Schmick, Sells, Springer, Haler, Roberts and Kenney.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/11, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/11/11, 3/18/11 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Tom, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Hill, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Ericksen, Kastama, Kilmer and White.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The regional universities are specifically authorized by the Legislature to grant any degree through a master's degree to any student who has completed a program of study in those areas which are determined by the faculty and the board of trustees of the institution to be appropriate for the granting of such degree. Before being offered, all degree programs are subject to the review and approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB).

In 2001 the Legislature authorized Eastern Washington University (EWU) to offer applied, but not research, doctorate level degrees in physical therapy, subject to review and approval by the HECB. This is the only graduate degree above a master's that a regional university has been authorized to offer.

An educational specialist degree (ED.S.) is an advanced degree for people who already have a master's degree with a teaching or educational focus. It is an intermediate degree between a master's and a doctorate. Some common ED.S. specialties include school psychology, curriculum and instruction, special education, and educational administration.

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 Bill: The Board of Trustees of the EWU is authorized to offer an ED.S. degree, subject to review and approval by the HECB.

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: This will allow Washington graduates to better compete with out-of-state applicants for Washington jobs. EWU already meets ED.S. accreditation requirements. This is an additional applied degree. Some Washington schools specifically require a specialist degree for school psychologists. Neighboring states offer this degree, but it is not currently available in Washington.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Ron Dalla, Vice Provost, Graduate Education, Research, Academic Planning and Evaluation, EWU; Susan Ruby, Assistant Professor - Director of School Psychology Program, EWU; Layne Brower, student, EWU; Melissa Gombosky, Washington School Counselors; David Buri, EWU.