

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1593

As of March 15, 2011

Title: An act relating to recruiting, preparing, and empowering school officials and holding them accountable.

Brief Description: Establishing a residency provisional principal certification.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations & Oversight (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlyle, Maxwell, Lytton, Probst, Ladenburg, Anderson, Pedersen, Billig, Dammeier, Wilcox, Dahlquist and Fagan).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/02/11, 79-18.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/14/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Juliana Roe (786-7438)

Background: To become certified as a school principal in Washington, individuals must have previously been certified as a teacher, have school-based experience in an instructional role, hold a master's degree, and complete a residency principal certification program approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB).

Principal certification programs must meet operational standards for accountability, program governance, program design, and have an advisory board. Programs must also provide evidence that their candidates demonstrate performance-based standards for knowledge and skills and educational leadership that have been established by the PESB. Principal candidates are also required to serve an internship of at least 540 hours during their certification program.

There are currently 14 PESB-approved principal certification programs, all offered by institutions of higher education.

Since 2001 the PESB has approved partnerships of educator preparation program providers and school districts to offer alternative route preparation of teachers. Alternative route programs are intended to attract non-traditional teacher candidates, including para-educators and other school staff seeking to become certified as teachers and mid-career professionals. Alternative route programs typically combine extensive field-based experience, intensive

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mentoring, and supplemental coursework that is often offered during the summer, in the evenings, and on weekends. Some programs are designed to have the teacher candidate employed under a conditional teacher certificate while in the program. Conditional certificates are issued at the request of a school district, for a particular assignment, and for a limited time-period.

Organizations such as New Teachers for New Schools and large urban school districts such as Chicago, New York, and Boston have developed alternative route principal preparation programs. These programs focus on extensive field-based experience, mentoring, and supplemental coursework and professional development with the intent of attracting nontraditional principal candidates, particularly for inner city and hard-to-serve schools. Most conduct rigorous screening of candidates and require demonstration of previous leadership experience.

Legislation enacted in 2010 requires the PESB to consider applications from non-higher education preparation program providers, including for principal certification. To date, none have applied. There currently is no conditional principal certificate as there is for teachers, nor are there separate provisions in law or rule for alternative route preparation for principals.

The same 2010 legislation established a new standard for school districts to transfer principals to a subordinate position after three years of employment as a principal, based on the superintendent's determination that the results of the principals' performance evaluation provide a valid reason for the transfer. No probationary period is required, but support and an attempt at remediation are required. A final decision by the school board to transfer the principal cannot be appealed. These provisions apply only in school districts with more than 35,000 students and to principals hired after June 10, 2010. For other school districts, principals can be transferred to a subordinate position only within the first three years of employment as a principal. Otherwise, this would constitute an adverse action against the principal's contract.

Summary of Bill: The PESB must establish a Residency Provisional principal certification (Provisional Certification). Applicants for Provisional Certification must (1) document professional managerial and leadership experience that meets standards established by the PESB; (2) complete a record and background check; (3) have been admitted to a PESB approved alternative route principal certification program (program); and (4) be recommended by a school district superintendent.

The PESB adopts standards for the required professional managerial and leadership experiences, which is not required to have occurred in a school setting.

Before recommending candidates for Provisional Certification, school district superintendents must conduct a publicly announced search for the principalship of a specific school and accept applications from persons seeking Provisional Certification and from regularly-certified principals.

Provisional Certificate holders may serve as a school principal only in a single district for not more than three years and must be enrolled in and making progress toward completion of an approved program. Once a Provisional Certificate holder successfully completes the

Program, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction issues a regular residency principal certificate. Principals certified under these provisions are not required to have teaching certificates.

The PESB must adopt standards for approval of programs, which can be offered by institutions of higher education or non-higher education program providers. Program providers must (1) operate the Program in partnership with school districts and the Washington State Leadership Academy; (2) develop and use a principal development plan for each candidate that places significant weight on the candidate's prior experience; (3) require candidates to demonstrate the performance-based standards for knowledge and skills and educational leadership for residency certification established by the PESB; (4) provide intensive mentoring of at least one full year with additional time if necessary; and (5) demonstrate a record of success in principal preparation, or if a new program, submit a record of success in preparation of other educators and the appropriate knowledge of faculty and instructors.

The Washington State Institute of Public Policy must conduct a comparison and analysis of alternative route principal certification programs across the country, including their impact on student learning and the extent that they result in non-traditional principal candidates and increased flexibility for school districts. A report is due December 1, 2011.

If specific funding is not provided in the Omnibus Appropriations Act, this act is null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

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 bill will not magically solve any problems, but it is part of the answer. It is important to have strong leadership in our schools for teachers, principals, and students. The bill is 100 percent permissive to local districts.

This bill opens the pool of potential principal candidates to other strong leaders in the community. These leaders must have the same requirements as normal principals, but for the teaching experience requirement. This is optional for school districts.

It is important to point out that counselors are allowed to become principals, and they do not have classroom experience.

Research has shown that university-district partnerships produce more effective candidates. It also shows that different types of schools require different types of leaders.

CON: Having a principal without instructional experience makes no sense. Principals are no longer just managers. Teachers may find it hard to take constructive feedback from an individual who has never been in a classroom. The person who will be the educational leader of teachers must have first-hand knowledge of what those teachers face if they are to be an effective instructional leader.

Educational leadership at the building level is fundamentally different from large organizational leadership.

The bill calls for a study of comparable programs across the country, but that does not seem to make any difference since it would not affect whether or not an alternative route program as designated in the bill is put into place.

OTHER: Out of all the states that offer alternative routes for principals, only two do not require classroom experience. Those two states require onerous pre-service experience to make up for the classroom experience. PESB is determined to put into place a workgroup to look at this issue. The work will be done in July; however, PESB will wait to publish until the Washington State Institute of Public Policy's work is completed in December.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Carlyle, prime sponsor; Anne Luce, Partnership for Learning; Heather Cope, League of Education Voters; Clifford Traisman, Seattle Public Schools.

CON: Gunnar Guttormsen, NBCT Longview School District; Lucinda Young, WA Education Assoc.; Bob Cooper; WA Assoc. of Colleges for Teacher Education.

OTHER: David Brenna, PESB; Jerry Bender, Assoc. of WA School Principals.