

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1600

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 23, 2011

Title: An act relating to elementary math specialists.

Brief Description: Concerning elementary math specialists.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Probst, Anderson, Maxwell and Roberts).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/26/11, 73-24.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/14/11, 3/23/11 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Harper, Vice Chair; Litzow, Ranking Minority Member; Eide, Fain, Hill, Hobbs, King, Nelson, Rockefeller and Tom.

Staff: Juliana Roe (786-7438)

Background: The purpose of the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is to establish policies and requirements for the preparation and certification of education professionals, ensuring that they (1) are competent in the professional knowledge and practice for which they are certified; (2) have a foundation of skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to help students with diverse needs, abilities, cultural experiences, and learning styles that meet or exceed the state learning goals; and (3) are committed to research-based practice and career-long professional development.

The PESB also serves as an advisory body to the Superintendent of Public Instruction on issues related to educator recruitment, hiring, mentoring and support, professional growth, retention, evaluation, and revocation and suspension of licensure.

A teacher must have an endorsement to his or her teaching certificate to teach a particular subject. At the secondary level, endorsements are based on specific academic subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, English, etc.). A teacher with an elementary education endorsement can teach any academic subject to students in grades kindergarten through eight.

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.

The PESB has created a procedure for adding specialty endorsements that are not required for the teacher to teach that subject. To date, there are five specialty endorsements: (1) deaf education; (2) environmental and sustainability education; (3) teacher of the visually impaired; (4) orientation and mobility teacher; and (5) gifted education.

A number of states, including Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, and Arizona, have created some form of endorsement in teaching elementary mathematics. In some cases the state requires this endorsement for teaching certain grade levels; in other cases, the endorsement is an optional supplement.

Summary of Bill: The PESB is encouraged to develop standards and adopt a specialty endorsement for an Elementary Mathematics Specialist (Specialist). A Specialist is a certificated teacher who has demonstrated the following knowledge and skills: (1) enhanced mathematics content knowledge and skills necessary to provide students, in grades kindergarten through eight, with a deep understanding of the essential academic learning requirements and performance expectations in mathematics; (2) knowledge and skills in a variety of instructional strategies for teaching mathematics content; and (3) knowledge and skills in instructional strategies targeted for students struggling in mathematics.

School districts are encouraged to use Specialists for direct instruction of students using an itinerant teacher model where the Specialist moves from classroom to classroom within the school.

School districts may work with local colleges and universities, educator preparation programs, and educational service districts to develop and offer training and professional development opportunities in the knowledge and skills necessary for a teacher to be considered a Specialist.

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 clear that elementary school teachers do not have the appropriate level of math skills to teach students math, and this is why a math specialist should be required. This endorsement will enable teachers to teach the level of math students need.

A great deal has been done over the past few years in enhancing math in schools. We may not be able to continue this over the next biennium. We can create elementary math endorsements with little cost. Teachers need this additional support. A specialist can build a school team with this endorsement. It will help struggling schools.

The QEC should focus on whether the endorsement will solve any problems. PESB will await the QEC's findings and recommendations before publishing the PESB's findings.

CON: This bill is a voluntary specialist endorsement that a teacher can pay for. The endorsement may or may not provide additional employment opportunities. Whether the endorsement will be allowed at a school will depend upon whether the school district can afford it. It would be more effective to come up with professional development in this subject matter.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Probst, prime sponsor; Representative Anderson, sponsor; Greta Bornemann, OSPI; David Brenna, PESB; Ramona Hattendorf, PTA.

CON: Lucinda Young, WEA.