

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2531

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to changing explicit alternative routes to teacher certification program requirements to expectations for program outcomes.

Brief Description: Changing explicit alternative routes to teacher certification program requirements to expectations for program outcomes.

Sponsors: Representatives Pollet, Dahlquist, Seaquist, Santos, Stonier, Bergquist, Haler, Zeiger, Morrell, Roberts, Haigh and Freeman; by request of Professional Educator Standards Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/23/14, 2/5/14 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Specifies that the design of alternative route programs can evolve over time to reflect innovations and improvement in educator preparation.
- Removes the requirement that applicants submit a proposal and adds the requirement that the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) establish policies, and provides oversight and accountability.
- Requires the PESB to report to the Legislature certain outcomes of the programs.
- Repeals the statute containing specific descriptions of alternative route programs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Magendanz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Fey, Haigh, Hargrove, Hawkins, Hayes, S. Hunt, Lytton, Muri, Orwall, Parker, Pollet and Seaquist.

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.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Dahlquist, Ranking Minority Member; Klippert and Warnick.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is a 13-member board responsible for establishing the requirements for state certification of educators and approving preparation and certification programs.

Alternative routes to teacher certification programs are partnerships between the PESB approved preparation programs, school districts, and others. These programs work with school district partners to identify core subject areas that are difficult to fill. The programs provide performance-based alternative paths for recruiting candidates to teach in program shortage areas.

Currently, applicants for the alternate route programs must submit a proposal that includes a description of the routes, a description of each party's role, assurances that mentors will be adequately trained, assurances that adequate mentor time will be provided, an identification of performance indicators and benchmarks, and a description of residency certification criteria. Programs may operate one to four specific routes, with each route specifying the candidates' education level, certification types, and time and requirements for program completion.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction identifies school districts that need assistance in advancing cultural competency skills in their workforces. The PESB then helps these school districts develop a partnership grant program with teacher preparation programs. A partnership grant program proposed by one of these schools receives priority eligibility for partnership grants.

In 2010 the Legislature required the PESB to transition the partnership grant program from a separate competitive grant program to a preparation program model, which is a more traditional model.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill specifies that the design of alternative route programs can evolve over time to reflect innovations and improvement in educator preparation.

The partnership grant program is reclassified as an alternative route partnership program.

The requirement that applicants for the alternative route program submit a proposal is removed. The requirement that the PESB establish policies for approval of nontraditional preparation programs and provide oversight and accountability related to program quality is added. The PESB is required, in establishing and amending rules for these programs, to:

- uphold criteria for the program design that is innovative and reflects evidence-based practice;
- continue to prioritize program designs tailored to the needs of experienced paraeducators and candidates of high academic achievement in the subject area they intend to teach, of which partnering districts have demonstrated need;
- expand access and opportunity for individuals to become teachers statewide; and
- give preference in admissions to applicants who are eligible veterans or national guard members and who meet the entry requirements for the program.

The PESB is required to report to the Legislature certain outcomes of the alternative route programs, starting December 1, 2014, and each even-numbered year thereafter. In considering administrative rules and reporting outcomes for alternative route programs, the PESB must examine the historical record of the data, reporting on:

- the number and percentage of alternative route program completers hired;
- the percentage of alternative route completers from underrepresented populations;
- three-year and five-year retention rates of alternative route completers;
- the average hiring dates of alternative route completers; and
- the percentage of alternative route completers hired in districts where their alternative route program was completed.

The statute containing specific descriptions of alternative route programs is repealed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires the PESB to examine historic data on alternative route programs when examining rules and reporting outcomes for the programs. It removes comparisons of alternative route completers to all preparation program completers in the reports. It requires reporting of the number of alternative route completers hired, in addition to the percentage hired.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Alternate Routes to teacher preparation program was an innovative model for which the Legislature adopted clear steps and standards defining residency and requiring submission of program plans. However, time has caught up with us and these innovations are now very standard. It is time to create additional flexibility that would allow the PESB to continue innovating. The alternative routes programs encourage professionals to change careers, share their experiences with children, and broaden the diversity of the teaching core. This bill has clear requirements and the PESB's rules will still ensure teachers are spending

time in the classroom learning about education theory and child development. The innovations we saw a decade ago are now commonplace. It is important to create an educational learning laboratory for teacher candidates. These laws have changed a couple times, so providing broad requirements in statute and allowing the PESB to create the specific rules is more flexible. The alternate routes programs are not an alternative certificate; teachers in the programs are subject to the same certification requirements as teachers who go through traditional programs. It is important to respond to the different demands of districts and to strengthen districts. It is important to make sure teacher candidates are connected to a district before certification and make sure districts have invested in the candidates in some way. This as a paraprofessional route and it brings a more diverse population into the workforce. This state has produced rigorous alternate route programs. Those who go through the programs are as capable as those who go through traditional programs. Those in both alternative route programs and traditional programs have successfully become teachers. There were not as many people enrolled in alternative route programs during the economic downturn, but rates are increasing again. This law will allow innovation and flexibility, so the PESB can quickly implement changes. The PESB is made of practitioners who know they are setting standards for their colleagues.

(With concerns) The PESB needs flexibility to craft alternate route programs based on new discoveries and the standards must be evidence-based. The problems are not in the structure of the program; rather they are in the standards stated in law. It is not possible to track teachers out of state. Also, retention and hiring dates are not completely trackable, especially for completers of alternative route programs. Traditional and alternative route program metrics are not comparable for many reasons.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Pollet, prime sponsor; David Brenna, Professional Educator Standards Board; and Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

(With concerns) Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.