
Higher Education Committee

HB 2661

Brief Description: Creating the Washington research institute for teaching excellence.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist and Magendanz.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Washington Research Institute for Teaching Excellence (WRITE), which must be hosted by Washington State University.
- Specifies that the mission of the WRITE is to conduct research on teaching to inform policy decisions related to teaching and to improve the practice of teaching in K-12 and higher education, including teacher preparation.
- Requires the WRITE to report to the Legislature biannually.
- Directs the WRITE to seek grants with the aim of becoming primarily supported through non-state funds, and to place a priority on grants that would fund fellowships for certain researchers.
- Requires the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) to conduct research in partnership with the WRITE, and the WSAC and other state agencies to provide staff expertise, research, and data.
- Requires the WRITE's director and staff to be guided by a Governing Board composed of members of an organization that represents the state colleges of education.
- Provides that sections relating to staffing and the Governing Board are null and void if funding is not provided.

Hearing Date: 2/4/14

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

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.

Teacher preparation programs are available at 22 Washington colleges and universities, in addition to multiple alternative route programs. Washington State University (WSU), one of the state's two research universities, has many highly ranked programs. The WSU's College of Education offers programs on four campuses. The Teaching and Learning Department (Department) has undergraduate and graduate programs focused on advancing knowledge and ethical practices in the field of education. The Learning and Performance Research Center at the WSU performs research on challenging educational and psychological research questions.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), a state agency, performs research on topics that will support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Research Institute for Teaching Excellence (WRITE) is created and must be hosted by the WSU.

The mission of the WRITE is to conduct research on teaching to inform policy decisions related to teaching and to improve the practice of teaching in K-12 and higher education, including teacher preparation.

The WRITE is required to:

- conduct research on teacher effectiveness including a focus on individualized instruction, the diverse cultural, social, and economic background of learners, and variation in regional needs;
- identify and disseminate best practices in teaching for replication or adaptation; and
- provide information to policy makers on strategies to improve teaching practices.

The WRITE is required to report to the education and higher education committees of the Legislature biannually.

"Best practices in teaching" are defined as methods of education practice that show direct evidence of improved student performance.

The WRITE is directed to seek grants from federal and private sources with the aim of becoming primarily supported through non-state funds, and to place a priority on grants that would fund fellowships for certain researchers.

The WSAC is required to conduct research in partnership with the WRITE, and the WSAC and other state agencies are required to assist the WRITE by providing staff expertise, research, and data.

The WRITE's director and staff are required to be guided by a Governing Board composed of members of an organization that represents the state colleges of education.

Sections relating to staffing and the Governing Board are null and void if funding is not provided.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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