

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5559

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As of February 6, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to educational specialist degrees at regional universities.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing educational specialist degrees at Central Washington University and Western Washington University.

**Sponsors:** Senators Bailey, Kohl-Welles, Tom and McAuliffe.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 2/05/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Staff:** Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

**Background:** One of the primary purposes of regional universities is to offer undergraduate and graduate education programs through the master's degree. The regional universities are specifically authorized by law to grant any degree through the master's degree to any student who has completed a program of study in an area determined by the faculty and the institution's board of trustees to be appropriate for granting a degree.

In 2011 legislation was enacted authorizing Eastern Washington University (EWU) to offer an educational specialist degree (Ed.S.). An 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.

Currently, EWU is the only regional university that has been authorized to offer a graduate degree above a master's.

**Summary of Bill:** The boards of trustees of Central Washington University (CWU) and Western Washington University (WWU) are authorized to offer Ed.S. degrees.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 4, 2013.

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*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.*

**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: EWU sought authority to offer the Ed.S. in 2011. WWU and CWU are seeking the same authority. The Ed.S. is designed for educational practitioners to deepen their knowledge and the emphasis is on applied learning as opposed to research. There are no other opportunities in northwest region of the state for educators to get the Ed.S., and they are not likely to relocate because they are employed as teachers. The universities need to remain competitive nationally. School psychology programs are becoming Ed.S programs not just master's programs. This about equity for students, who are taking the rigor of an Ed.S. program without being able to earn the degree.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Sherry Burkey, WWU; Steve DuPont, CWU.