
Education Committee

E2SSB 6455

Brief Description: Expanding the professional educator workforce by increasing career opportunities in education, creating a more robust enrollment forecasting, and enhancing recruitment efforts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Dammeier, Rolfes, Litzow, Billig, Rivers, Conway and McAuliffe).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Requires, subject to a specific appropriation, a comprehensive, statewide initiative to increase the number of qualified individuals who apply for teaching positions in Washington, including a recruitment campaign and a web-based application depository accessible by school districts.
- Provides that certain retired teachers may be employed as substitute teachers without a suspension of pension benefits, for a limited time, and if properly compensated.
- Specifies that, subject to a specific appropriation, "caseload" for purposes of caseload forecasts of common school students includes school districts.
- Expands, for a limited time, the endorsement areas eligible under conditional scholarship programs for teachers and paraeducators, and includes a review of the effectiveness of the expansion.
- Requires that the Professional Certificate be issued to experienced out-of-state teachers who meet certain requirements.
- Makes tuition and fee waivers available to K-12 classified staff when used for coursework relevant to the work assignment.

Hearing Date: 2/23/16

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, Certification, and Endorsement.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), a thirteen member board, is responsible for the policy and oversight of Washington's system of educator preparation and certification. The PESB has approved teacher preparation programs at 21 institutions of higher education. Some programs offer certificates, while other programs offer bachelor's, master's, or doctor's degrees.

Teaching Certificates. There are two levels of teacher certification: (1) residency, which requires completion of an approved teacher preparation program; and (2) professional, which requires a minimum of two years of experience, and either completion of an external, uniform assessment adopted by the PESB, called the ProTeach Portfolio, or completion of a certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, called the National Board Certificate (NBC).

The PESB has an expedited professional certification process for out-of-state teachers who have five years or more of successful teaching experience to demonstrate skills and impact on student learning commensurate with Washington requirements for professional certification. The PESB has determined that teachers from out-of-state with a NBC may be awarded the Professional Certificate.

Teacher Shortage Areas. The PESB designates official shortage areas based on periodic analysis of educator supply and demand in Washington. An endorsement is the subject area in which a certified educator is authorized to teach, along with designated grade levels for that area. There are 39 endorsements in Washington, not including a large number of career and technical education endorsements. The current endorsement shortage areas, as defined by the PESB, include: special education, mathematics, and science.

Alternative Route Programs. The Alternative Route to Teacher Certification (Alternative Route) program is designed to fill subject matter or geographic need shortage areas by allowing individuals with work and life experience to segue into teaching through flexible, expedient teacher preparation programs. In these programs, school districts, or districts in cooperation with an Educational Service District (ESD), work in partnership with teacher preparation programs to offer shortened, field-based preparation programs with a mentored internship. There are Alternative Route programs at eight higher education institutions.

Postretirement Employment Options.

Washington retirement systems have various rules relating to the conditions under which a retiree may return to work for a retirement system-participating employer and continue to receive pension benefits. For members of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), pension benefits will generally be suspended after a member works for more than 867 hours per year with a participating employer. The TRS Plans 2 and 3 have an unreduced retirement age of 65. Early retirement benefits begin at age 55 with 20 or 10 years of service, respectively. An improved early retirement formula, or factor, (ERF) was established in 2000, to permit members with 30 years of service to receive a pension reduced by 3 percent per year from age 65 to the member's age at retirement, rather than a full actuarial reduction. Members retiring under this provision are able to work for up to 867 hours per year without suspension of benefits, just like those retiring at age 65. Another ERF was established in 2008 that allows members to retire with unreduced pensions beginning at age 62, but members are unable to work for a state retirement system employer until age 65 without immediate suspension of benefits. In 2012 an ERF for

certain members hired after May 1, 2013 was established that would reduce benefits for early retirees by 5 percent per year – more than the earlier ERF formulas – but also allow retired members to work for up to 867 hours per year without suspension of benefits.

Caseload Forecast Council.

The Caseload Forecast Council (CFC) is a statutory body, made up of four Legislators and two Governor appointees, that oversees the preparation and approval of the official state caseload forecasts. The caseloads forecast by the CFC include the number of persons expected to meet entitlement requirements and require the services of public assistance programs, state correctional institutions, medical assistance programs, and the common school system.

The K-12 Basic Education forecast is composed of K-12 Basic Education and Running Start program enrollments, as well as enrollment generated by the University of Washington Transition program, Open Door Dropout Reengagement program, summer school, and private and homeschooled students receiving ancillary services from public schools. In general, K-12 enrollment is forecast in as a ten month average of full time equivalent (FTE) enrollments, where one FTE is the equivalent of one student enrolled full time. The CFC also forecasts enrollments by headcount for the Bilingual Education program and the Special Education program.

Teacher and Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship Programs.

The Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship (Educator Retooling) program is limited to current K-12 teachers. In order to receive conditional scholarship awards teachers and individuals certificated with an elementary education endorsement must pursue an endorsement in a subject or geographic endorsement shortage area, as defined by the PESB, including mathematics, science, special education, bilingual education, English language learner, computer science education, or environmental and sustainability education.

The Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship (Pipeline for Paraeducators) program is available to paraeducators who want to become teachers. Eligible paraeducators must have at least three years of classroom experience, but no college degree. It is anticipated that individuals enrolled in the program will complete their Associate of Arts degree in two years or less and become eligible for a mathematics, special education, or English as a second language endorsement via Route One in the Alternative Route to Teacher Certification program.

Tuition and Fee Waivers.

There are two categories of tuition waivers: state supported and discretionary. State supported waivers may require, or allow, the public institutions of higher education to waive tuition and required fees for a certain categories of individuals. The institutions may offer tuition and fee waivers for state and educational employees. The educational employees eligible for the waivers are teachers and other certified instructional staff employed at public common and vocational schools that are holding, or seeking, a valid endorsement and assigned in a state-identified shortage area.

Educational employees who are classified staff, meaning staff who are not required to hold professional educator certificates, are not eligible for tuition waivers. Paraeducators are classified staff.

Employment Security Department.

The Employment Security Department provides employment services, including career research, job search tips, job listings, and a resume depository.

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) is composed of an equal number of House of Representatives and Senate members, Democrats and Republicans. The nonpartisan staff of the JLARC conducts performance audits, program evaluations, sunset reviews, and other analyses assigned by the Legislature and the committee itself.

Summary of Bill:

Teacher Recruitment Initiative.

Subject to a specific appropriation, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in consultation with districts, ESDs, and other state agencies, must develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide initiative to increase the number of qualified individuals who apply for teaching positions in Washington. In developing and implementing the initiative, the OSPI, in partnership with the Employment Security Department, must:

- develop and implement a teacher recruitment campaign that targets individuals with teaching certificates who are not employed as teachers, undergraduate college students who have not chosen a major, out-of-state teachers, military personnel and their spouses, and other groups of individuals who may be interested in teaching in Washington public schools;
- incorporate certificated positions into the Employment Security Department's existing web-based depository for job applications that allows for access by school districts in the state for purposes of hiring teachers and other certificated positions; and
- create or enhance an existing web site that provides useful information to individuals who are interested in teaching in Washington.

This section expires July 1, 2018.

Postretirement Employment Options.

Effective immediately and until August 1, 2020, certain teachers who have retired under the alternate early retirement provisions may be employed with an employer that has documented a shortage of certificated substitute teachers without a suspension of benefits for up to 630 hours per school year if: (1) the retired teacher reenters employment more than one calendar month after his or her accrual date and after the effective date of this section; (2) the retired teacher is employed exclusively as a substitute teacher in an instructional capacity; and (3) the employing school district compensates the district's substitute teachers at a level that is at least equal to the full daily amount allocated by the state to the district for substitute teacher compensation.

Caseload Forecast Council.

It is specified that the caseload forecast for the number of persons expected to meet entitlement requirements in the common school system must be: by school district and in total statewide. When determining district level forecasts, the CFC must consider a geographic information system solution and providing districts the ability to adjust the final forecast. The forecast of entitlement requirements at the district level is subject to a specific appropriation.

Teacher and Paraeducator Conditional Scholarship Programs.

Until July 1, 2026, the Educator Retooling program is made available to individuals who wish to obtain endorsements in elementary education or early childhood education.

Until July 1, 2026, the Pipeline for Paraeducators program is made available to paraeducators who wish to obtain teacher certification and endorsement in bilingual education, elementary education, computer science education, or early childhood education.

Program Review. No later than January 1, 2026, the JLARC must review the expansion of the programs described above. The JLARC must determine the effectiveness of the expansion and provide a recommendation to the fiscal committees of the Legislature as to whether the expansion should be continued without modification, modified, scheduled for sunset review at a future date, or terminated immediately.

The JLARC's state spending performance statement for the expansion of these programs is intended only to be used for subsequent evaluation of the expansion of these programs; it is not intended to create a private right of action by any party or be used to determine eligibility for the services provided by these programs.

Out-of-state Teachers.

A Professional Certificate must be issued to out-of-state teachers with five or more years of successful teaching experience if the teacher holds a valid NBC. Until June 30, 2021, a Professional Certificate must also be issued to out-of-state teachers with five or more years of successful teaching experience if the teacher:

- has a continuing or advanced level certificate from another state, or that state's equivalent, issued by the other state; or
- has a continuing or advanced level certificate that allows the individual to teach internationally.

Tuition and Fee Waivers.

Tuition and service and activities fee waivers for state employees are made available for K-12 classified staff at public common and vocational schools when used for coursework relevant to the work assignment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for the section on post-retirement options, which takes effect immediately.