

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1570

As of March 27, 2015

Title: An act relating to creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.

Brief Description: Creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Gregory, Bergquist, S. Hunt, Reykdal, Kilduff, Ortiz-Self and Pollet; by request of Governor Inslee).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/02/15, 70-27.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/16/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Matthew Lemon (786-7405)

Background: The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) offers the Retooling to Teach Mathematics and Science conditional scholarship to current K–12 teachers and individuals with an elementary education certificate who are not employed in positions requiring their certificate to pursue endorsements in high-demand mathematics and science endorsement areas. Current K–12 teachers may use the conditional scholarship to pursue endorsements in secondary mathematics or science, or both, and middle-level mathematics or science, or both. Individuals with an unused elementary education certificate may use the conditional scholarship to pursue endorsements in middle-level mathematics or science, or both. Each recipient may receive up to \$3,000 per fiscal year for each conditional scholarship obtained to pay for endorsement tests and any observations or applicable coursework needed to attain the new endorsement. The scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis subject to appropriation and no funding was provided for the program in the 2013-15 biennium.

The conditional scholarship is a loan that is forgiven for teacher service in the same endorsement area in which the recipient obtains certification. Teaching service must be in a Washington K–12 public school. The state forgives the loan obligation entirely if the recipient teaches in the endorsement area for two years per scholarship received. Teachers may receive multiple loans if they are pursuing endorsements in both mathematics and

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science. Eligible veterans or National Guard members must be given preference when selecting scholarship recipients.

Schools in Washington that do not meet certain performance criteria under federal and state accountability provisions must develop and implement school improvement plans and are designated as Priority Schools and Focus Schools. Priority Schools are identified based on the performance of all students in the school and Focus Schools are identified based on the performance of student subgroups. For the 2014-15 school year there are 113 Priority schools and 162 Focus Schools.

In the 2013-14 school year there were 110,579 English language learner students identified for service statewide which is an increase of more than 32 percent since the 2005-06 school year. English language learner student enrollment has increased by more than 5 percent per year in each of the past three years in more than 130 schools across the state.

Summary of Bill: The Retooling to Teach Mathematics and Science Conditional Scholarship Program is renamed the Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship Program.

Current K–12 teachers and individuals holding an elementary school education certificate may receive a conditional scholarship to pursue special education, bilingual education, English language learner, computer science education, or environmental and sustainability education endorsements, in addition to mathematics and science endorsements.

When selecting scholarship recipients, PESB must also give preference to teachers assigned to schools implementing a required state or federal plan for improvement and to teachers assigned to schools in which enrollment of English language learner students has increased by an average of more than 5 percent per year over the previous three years.

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: This bill helps teachers and districts with unexpected overloads or shortages in certain subject areas, and helps districts who choose to have experienced teachers provide assistance to other programs like English language learner and special education. Expanding access to these endorsements will encourage more students to enter the teaching profession and will make it easier for current teachers to add an additional endorsement to help address the needs of their school. Adding an endorsement can be as simple as taking a content area test or it could cost the teacher thousands of dollars to take all of the content and pedagogy courses tied to the new subject. This scholarship can help districts fill part-time needs by allowing a teacher to add an endorsement and teach an additional course. Building and developing a workforce is a complicated challenge and this can give districts more flexibility.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn.; David Brenna, PESB; Steve DuPont, Central WA University.

Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying: No one.