

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 2573

As of February 24, 2016

Title: An act relating to the shortage of public school teachers and substitute teachers.

Brief Description: Concerning the shortage of public school teachers and substitute teachers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Santos, Magendanz, Kilduff, Reykdal, Rossetti, Muri, Pollet and Hickel; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/17/16, 92-6.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/23/16.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Requires the development and implementation of a statewide initiative to increase the number of qualified individuals who apply for teaching positions in Washington, including recruiting activities and hiring services.
- Creates a grant program to fund recruitment specialists in teacher preparation programs.
- Requires that certain out-of-state teachers be issued a Washington Professional Certificate.
- Provides that certain retired teachers may work as mentors or advisers to student teachers for up to 630 hours per year without a suspension of pension benefits.
- Expands the Alternate Route to Teacher Certification programs.
- Requires plans describing how public institutions of higher education with Alternate Route programs will partner with school districts to place resident teachers.
- Expands the Beginning Educator Support Team program.
- Requires development of mentor training program goals for teacher preparation program curricula.
- Expands the Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship to teachers pursuing endorsements in elementary education or early childhood education.
- Requires development of a Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant program to provide financial aid to individuals in teacher preparation programs.

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.

- Creates a grant program to provide additional funds to student teaching residents at Title I schools who demonstrate financial need.
- Requires districts to report the number of teachers they plan to hire in the following year.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alia Kennedy (786-7405)

Background: Teacher Certification. 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 Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), called the ProTeach Portfolio, or completion of a certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Teachers in Washington are required to obtain the Professional Certificate sometime between their third and seventh year of teaching. Out-of-state teachers who want to teach in Washington must also obtain a Professional Certificate within seven years of being hired. The Professional Certificate is currently awarded to teachers who have: (1) completed the ProTeach Portfolio; (2) completed a program in another state whose advanced level certification program is comparable to that in Washington, as determined by PESB; or (3) a certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Alternative Teacher Preparation and Certification Programs. The Alternate Route to Certification programs are designed to fill subject matter or geographic 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 Alternate Route programs at eight higher education institutions.

Teacher Shortage Areas and Endorsements. 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.

The Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship program award conditional scholarships to educators who pursue endorsement in a subject or geographic shortage area, as defined by PESB. Eligible endorsement areas currently include mathematics, science, special education, bilingual education, English language learner, computer science education, or environmental and sustainability education. The annual scholarship - which may not exceed \$3,000 - is for the cost of tuition, test fees, and educational expenses, including books, supplies, and transportation for the endorsement pathway being pursued.

Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST). The BEST program provides professional development and mentor support for beginning educators and educators on probation. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) administers grant funding for the BEST program. The BEST program includes professional development for beginning educators and mentors, release time for beginning educators and mentors to work together, orientation or individualized assistance before the start of the school year, and program evaluation.

Financial Aid Programs. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) administers the majority of the state's student financial aid programs.

The State Need Grant program provides need-based financial aid to income-eligible undergraduate students at eligible public and private institutions of higher education. Eligible students have a household income that is less than 70 percent of the state's median household income. The State Need Grant award values are based on the tuition and fee rates at Washington's public institutions of higher education and are prorated by income category and part-time enrollment.

The Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship Program was created in 1987. The program is designed to encourage qualified individuals to enter the teaching profession. Participants in the program incur an obligation to repay the conditional scholarship, with interest and an equalization fee, unless they teach for two years in an approved education program for each year of scholarship received. However, participants who teach in a designated teacher shortage area have one year of loan canceled for each year they teach in the shortage area. The program was last funded in fiscal year 2010 at \$1 million annually.

Teachers' Retirement System. The normal retirement age for members of Plans 2 and 3 of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) is age 65. TRS Plan 2 members with 20 years of service and TRS Plan 3 members with 10 years of service can retire as early as age 55. Benefits paid to persons who retire early from TRS Plans 2 or 3 with less than 30 years of service are calculated using early retirement factors that provide a full actuarial reduction based on the number of years between the retirement age and age 65. For example, a 27 percent reduction for retirement at age 62, or a 41 percent reduction for retirement at age 60.

Two early retirement factor options are available to TRS Plan 2 and 3 members who retire with 30 or more years of service. One of the options was created in 2000 and reduces benefits by 3 percent for each year in the period between the retirement age and age 65. For example a 9 percent reduction for retirement at age 62, or a 15 percent reduction for retirement at age 60. The other option that provides smaller benefit reductions was implemented in 2008 as a replacement for gain-sharing benefits. Under the 2008 early retirement factors, TRS Plan 2 and 3 members with 30 years of service may retire at age 62 with no reduction of benefit and at age 60 with a 5 percent reduction.

State law does not prohibit persons who retire from TRS Plans 2 or 3 from returning to work but it does limit when a retiree may work and continue receiving pension payments. In general, payments are suspended when a TRS retiree works more than 867 hours per year in a position included in TRS or another state retirement plan. However, payments are

suspended immediately if a TRS Plan 2 or 3 retiree who retired using the 2008 early retirement factors returns to work in any kind of position with a state retirement plan employer prior to age 65. This includes returning to work as a substitute teacher.

Summary of Bill: Teacher Recruitment Campaign. Subject to a specific appropriation, OSPI, in consultation with ESDs and school district staff, 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, OSPI must:

- include a teacher recruitment component that targets groups of individuals who may be interested in teaching in Washington public schools, such as: college students who have not chosen a major, out-of-state teachers, military personnel and their spouses, and individuals with teaching certificates who are not currently employed as teachers;
- contract for the development of a statewide system to provide recruitment and hiring services, including a centralized hiring portal, to small school districts, and a statewide central application depository that can be accessed by small school districts for purposes of hiring teachers and other certificated positions;
- create or enhance an existing website that provides useful information to individuals who are interested in teaching in Washington; and
- take other actions to increase the number of qualified individuals who apply for teaching positions in Washington.

Workforce Training and Educator Coordinating Board Recruitment Efforts. Subject to a specific appropriation, the Workforce Training and Educator Coordinating Board, in collaboration with PESB, must work with appropriate public agencies, school districts and ESDs, and other parties to disseminate information designed to increase recruitment into PESB-approved teacher preparation programs. The information must be disseminated statewide using existing channels. This section expires July 1, 2019.

Recruitment Specialists Grant Program. Subject to a specific appropriation, PESB must create and administer the Recruitment Specialists Grant program to provide funds to PESB-approved teacher preparation programs to hire, or contract with, recruitment specialists that focus on recruitment of individuals who are from a traditionally underrepresented group among teachers in Washington when compared to the common school population. This section expires July 1, 2018.

Professional Certification for Out-of-state Teachers. PESB must create a method to determine the comparability of rigor between the Washington Professional Certification process and the second-level teacher certification process of other states in its identification of an expedited Professional Certification process for experienced out-of-state teachers.

PESB must issue a Professional Certification to out-of-state teachers with five years or more of successful teaching experience if the teacher holds:

- a certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; or
- a second-level teacher certificate from another state that has been determined to be comparable to the Washington Professional Certificate.

Retired Teachers. Until August 1, 2020, certain teachers who have retired under the alternate early retirement provisions may be employed with an employer that has a documented shortage of certificated substitute teachers without a suspension of benefits for up to 630 hours per school year, if the retired teacher:

- reenters employment more than one calendar month after his or her accrual date and after the effective date of this section;
- is employed exclusively as a mentor to teachers or an adviser to students in PESB-approved teacher preparation programs; and
- has received appropriate training as defined by the OSPI, such as a National Board Certification or other specialized training.

Alternate Route Program Expansion Efforts. Subject to a specific appropriation, PESB must convene meetings between school districts that do not have an Alternate Route program and the nearest PESB-approved teacher preparation program to determine whether the districts and institutions can partner to apply to PESB to operate an Alternate Route program. Subject to a specific appropriation, the public institutions without PESB-approved Alternate Route programs must submit proposals to PESB to offer such programs by September 1, 2016. If approved, the institutions must implement an Alternate Route program according to a timeline suggested by PESB. This section expires July 1, 2017.

Mentoring Teachers. By July 1, 2018, institutions of higher education with PESB-approved Alternate Route programs must develop a plan describing how the institution will partner with school districts in the general geographic region of the school, or where its programs are offered, regarding placement of resident teachers. The plans must be developed in collaboration with districts desiring to partner with the institutions, and may include use of unexpended federal or state funds to support residencies and mentoring for students who are likely to continue teaching in the district in which they have a supervised student teaching residency. The plans must be updated at least biennially.

Beginning Educator Support Team Program. A mentor is an educator who has achieved appropriate training in assisting, coaching, and advising beginning teachers or student teaching residents as defined by the OSPI, such as a National Board Certification or other specialized training. Candidates in Alternate Route programs are offered support through the BEST program. Funds are prioritized to school districts with a large influx of beginning teachers.

The BEST program must have a goal to provide beginning teachers from underrepresented populations with a mentor who has strong ties to underrepresented populations. OSPI must notify districts about the BEST program and encourage them to apply for program funds.

Mentor Training. In fiscal year 2017, OSPI must collaborate with PESB and PESB-approved teacher preparation programs to develop mentor training program goals. Once developed, PESB-approved teacher preparation programs are encouraged to develop and implement curricula that meet the mentor training program goals. This section expires July 1, 2019.

Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship. Teachers pursuing endorsements in elementary education or early childhood education are eligible for the Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship program.

Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant. Subject to a specific appropriation, the Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant program is established within the Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program. The purpose of the Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant program is to encourage individuals to become teachers by providing financial aid to individuals enrolled in professional educator standards-approved teacher preparation programs. WSAC must develop and adopt rules to administer the program.

As part of its rule-making process, WSAC must collaborate with PESB, the Washington State School Directors' Association, and PESB-approved teacher preparation programs to develop a framework for the Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant program, including eligibility requirements, contractual obligations, conditional grant amounts, and loan repayment requirements.

In developing the eligibility requirements, the WSAC must consider: whether the individual has a financial need, is a first-generation college student, or is from a traditionally underrepresented group among teachers in Washington; whether the individual is completing an Alternate Route program; whether the individual plans to obtain an endorsement in subject shortage area; the characteristic of any geographic shortage area that the individual plans to teach in; and whether a school district has committed to offering the individual employment once the individual obtains a Residency Certificate.

In developing the contractual obligations, WSAC must consider requiring the individual to: obtain a Residency Certificate; teach in an endorsement shortage area; and commit to teach for five school years in an approved education program with a need for a teacher with such an endorsement at the time of hire.

In developing the Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant program award amounts, WSAC must consider whether the individual is: enrolled in a public or private institution of higher education, a resident, in a baccalaureate or post baccalaureate program, or in an Alternate Route program. In addition, the award amounts must not result in a reduction of the individual's federal or state grant aid, including Pell grants, State Need Grants, College Bound Scholarships, or Opportunity Scholarships.

In developing the repayment requirements for a Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant that is converted into a loan, the terms and conditions of the loan must follow the interest rate and repayment terms of the federal Direct Subsidized Loan program. In addition, WSAC must consider the following repayment schedule, including interest and an equalization fee:

- 85 percent of the conditional amount if less than one school year of teaching is completed;
- 75 percent of the conditional amount if less than two school years of teaching are completed;
- 55 percent of the conditional amount if less than three school years of teaching are completed; and

- 40 percent of the conditional amount if less than four school years of teaching are completed.

By November 1, 2018, and November 1, 2020, WSAC must submit reports to the Legislature that recommend whether the Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant program should be continued, modified, or terminated, and that include information about the recipients of the grants under this program.

Residency Grant. Subject to a specific appropriation, WSAC must administer a Student Teaching Residency Grant program to provide additional funds to individuals completing residencies at public schools in Washington. To qualify for the grant, recipients must be enrolled in a PESB-approved teacher preparation program, be completing or about to start a student teaching residency at a Title I school, and demonstrate financial need.

Reporting Requirement. By June 15 of each year, school districts must report to OSPI the number of classroom teachers the district projects will be hired in the following school year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 19, 2016.

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 is the product of months of collaboration and takes a comprehensive approach to address the teacher shortage crisis. The bill does not address teacher pay, but does address teacher preparation with efforts to increase enrollment through financial aid, loan forgiveness, and mentorship programs. Recently retired teachers can return to work as mentors. Alternative route programs are important. Teacher certification standards will not be reduced. The bill focuses on building stronger teachers through mentorship. The Legislature should reconsider allowing retired teachers to only return as mentors or advisors because the state is in need of substitute teachers. The professional certification requirements deter teachers from coming to Washington. Lessening the requirements would reduce barriers for out-of-state teachers and create bridges that would allow Washington to attract qualified experienced educators from across the border. Recruitment efforts should include colleges, the Professional Educator Standards Board, teachers, and other stakeholders. The bill should include student enrollment forecasting. Language on the professional certification for out-of-state teachers should match the Senate bill because as currently written, it would only apply to one other state. There is some confusion regarding use of the terms "residency" and "resident teachers."

CON: The safe environment for teachers caused the teacher shortage. No accountability.

OTHER: Efforts to address the teacher shortage should include educational staff associates.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Pollet, Sponsor; Jene (Jenna) Jones, League of Education Voters; Dave Smith, Newport School District/Eastern Washington Quality Schools

Coalition; Brian Talbott, Nine Mile Falls School District; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Bob Butts, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; David Brenna, Professional Educator Standards Board; Colleen Rust, The Evergreen State College.

CON: Grazyna Prouty, Washington certified teacher (continuing contract in Tahoma 2005/2006 - 2010-2011), ESL (ELL), Bilingual).

OTHER: Susan Sturms, Washington State Special Education Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.