

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5495

As of January 30, 2015

Title: An act relating to confidentiality of educator professional growth plans.

Brief Description: Concerning the confidentiality of educator professional growth plans.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, McAuliffe, Dammeier, Rolfes and Chase; by request of Professional Educator Standards Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 2/03/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The Public Records Act (PRA). The PRA, enacted in 1972 as part of Initiative 276, requires that all state and local government agencies make all public records available for public inspection and copying unless certain statutory exemptions apply. Under the PRA, a public record includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency, regardless of physical form or characteristics.

Over 500 specific references in the PRA or other statutes remove certain information from application of the PRA, provide exceptions to the public disclosure and copying of certain information, or designate certain information as confidential. The provisions requiring public records disclosure must be interpreted liberally while the exemptions are interpreted narrowly to effectuate the general policy favoring disclosure.

Professional Growth Plans (PGPs). The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) has established two levels of certification: residency, which is achieved after completion of an approved preparation program; and professional, which is a second-tier certification achieved after three years of experience and a specified process of additional professional development. For renewal of professional certificates after September 1, 2014, instead of a certain number of hours of continuing education, PESB will require teachers and principals to establish individualized PGPs, under which a variety of planned activities may occur that are intended to improve their knowledge and skills.

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.

Summary of Bill: PGPs in educator license renewals submitted through the eCert system in the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction are exempt from public inspection and copying.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.