

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6097

As of February 12, 2016

Title: An act relating to modifying the future teachers conditional scholarship and loan repayment program to increase the number of early elementary teachers.

Brief Description: Modifying the future teachers conditional scholarship and loan repayment program to increase the number of early elementary teachers.

Sponsors: Senators Ranker, Dammeier, Rolfes, Litzow, Billig, Hargrove, Nelson, McAuliffe and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/08/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Michele Alishahi (786-7433)

Background: Future Teachers Program. In 2004, the Legislature created the Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program (Future Teachers). It is designed to encourage outstanding students and paraprofessionals to become teachers and to encourage current teachers to obtain additional endorsements in teacher shortage subjects. Recipients agree to teach in an approved educational program in Washington public schools in return for conditional scholarships or loan repayments. Priority is given to individuals seeking an additional certification or an additional endorsement in math, science, technology education, agricultural education, business and marketing education, family and consumer science education, or special education.

Recipients can receive conditional scholarships or loan repayments for up to five years. Award amounts cannot exceed tuition and fees at the participant's college or university, or full-time resident undergraduate (RUG) tuition and fees at the University of Washington – whichever is lower. The state will forgive one year of scholarship or loan obligation for every two years a recipient teaches in an approved educational program in Washington State public schools.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) administers the program. WSAC may conduct its own application process for selecting recipients or it may use application

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processes for selecting similar students in cooperation with the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

The Future Teachers program has been suspended to new applicants since 2011.

K-3 Class Size Reduction. In 2010, the state Legislature enacted class-size reduction goals to reach one teacher to 17 students in kindergarten through third grade (K–3) by the 2017-18 school year. The K-3 class reduction goal was part of a phased-in implementation of changes to the K-12 Basic Education Program.

Summary of Bill: The Future Teachers program is modified to focus exclusively on increasing the number of early elementary teachers teaching in kindergarten through third grade in Washington. In return for the conditional scholarship or loan repayment, recipients agree to teach in any grade, K-3, in Washington State public schools.

The number of years that recipients can receive conditional scholarships or loan repayments is decreased from five years to four years. Full-time RUG tuition and fees at the University of Washington is not included as part of the cap for award amounts. The amount of the awards cannot exceed tuition and fees at the recipient's college or university. The length of the teaching service requirement is decreased from two years to one year. The state will forgive one year of scholarship or loan obligation for every year a recipient teaches in any grade, K-3, in a Washington State public schools.

In cooperation with PESB, WSAC is required to conduct its own application process for selecting recipients, including establishing a committee for screening and selecting recipients of the conditional scholarship.

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: We support this bill. There is a national teacher shortage. Both recruitment and retention of teachers are problematic areas. Funding this bill will address both issues.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

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