

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6097

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, February 9, 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, 2/09/16 [DPS, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6097 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget; Ranker, Ranking Minority Member, Operating; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Brown, Conway, Darneille, Hasegawa, Hewitt, Nelson, O'Ban, Padden, Parlette, Pedersen, Schoesler and Warnick.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Rolfes.

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

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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 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 (Recommended Substitute): 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. The amount of the awards cannot exceed tuition and fees at the recipient's college or university or full-time RUG tuition and fees at the University of Washington - whichever is lower. 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.

State Spending Performance Statement. By expanding the Future Teachers program to focus exclusively on K-3 teachers, the Legislature intends to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase statewide early elementary teachers in grades kindergarten through third.
- Increase applications for the Future Teachers program for early education certifications.
- Attract candidates who are successfully employed in the education field for more than five years.

- Determine which state-funded teacher preparation scholarship program, the Future Teachers program or the Alternative Routes program, provides the most successful teacher applicants.

By January 1, 2026, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) is to evaluate the effectiveness of the program expansion to increase early elementary teachers in grades K-3, and provide a recommendation to the legislative fiscal committees on whether the program expansion should be continued without modification, modified, scheduled for sunset review at a future date, or terminated immediately. JLARC may require WSAC to collect and quantify the information and data needed to review the performance of the program expansion. JLARC may also survey scholarship recipients and school districts.

The expansion of the Future Teacher program expires on July 1, 2026.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Full-time resident undergraduate tuition and fees at the University of Washington are restored as part of the cap for award amounts.

A state spending performance statement is added that identifies the goals of expanding the Future Teachers program. JLARC is directed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program to increase early elementary teachers in grades K-3 and report its recommendation to the legislative fiscal committees no later than January 1, 2026.

The expansion of the Future Teachers program expires on July 1, 2026.

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 on Original Bill: 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 on Original Bill: PRO: Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

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