

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1654

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to changing explicit alternative routes to teacher certification program requirements to expectations for program outcomes.

Brief Description: Changing explicit alternative routes to teacher certification program requirements to expectations for program outcomes.

Sponsors: Representatives McCaslin, Bergquist, Ortiz-Self, Muri and Pollet; by request of Professional Educator Standards Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/7/17, 2/14/17 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/17, 98-0.

Passed Senate: 4/4/17, 49-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Repeals the statute describing each of the alternative route programs in detail, and instead provides the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) with rulemaking authority with respect to the design of the alternative route programs, and specifies expected outcomes for the program.
- Requires a report from the PESB with respect to the alternative route programs beginning December 1, 2017, and every two years thereafter, and specifies the data that the report must include.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Harris, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Hargrove, Johnson, Kilduff, Lovick, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Slatter, Springer, Steele, Stokesbary and Volz.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

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.

Background:

In 2001 the Legislature first authorized the alternative route to residency teacher certification programs. In these programs, one or more school districts and a Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) approved preparation program, partner to develop and offer an alternative route program.

The PESB provides grant funding to support alternative route teacher preparation programs that engage in grow your own teacher strategies. These grants are available to preparation programs, school districts, and teacher candidates (in the form of scholarships). Applicants are selected based on their commitment and ability to partner with one another in order to create effective alternative route programs that meet district workforce development needs. The PESB provides technical assistance and guidance in creating strong partnerships, developing clear expectations, identifying how to structure the alternative routes program for greater success, and understanding the regional and state needs of districts.

There are various alternative route programs intended to attract different possible candidates, and these are all spelled out in statute, as follows:

- *Route 1: For Classified Staff with Transferable Associate Degrees.* Alternative route programs operating Route 1 enroll currently employed classified instructional employees (paraeducators) with transferable associate degrees seeking residency teacher certification with endorsements in special education, bilingual education, or English as a second language. Candidates enrolled in Route 1 complete both their baccalaureate degree and requirements for residency certification in two years or less, including a mentored internship to be completed in the final year.
- *Route 2: For Classified Staff with Baccalaureate Degrees.* Alternative route programs operating Route 2 enroll currently employed classified staff with baccalaureate degrees seeking residency teacher certification in subject matter shortage areas or shortages due to geographic location. Candidates enrolled in Route 2 must complete a mentored internship complemented by flexibly scheduled training and coursework offered at a local site, such as a school or educational service district, or online or via video-conference, in collaboration with the higher education partner.
- *Route 3: For Individuals with Baccalaureate Degrees Employed Outside the School System.* Alternative route programs operating Route 3 enroll individuals with baccalaureate degrees, who are not employed in the district at the time of application. Priority is given to individuals who are seeking residency teacher certification in subject matter shortage areas or shortages due to geographic location. Candidates enrolled in Route 3 attend an intensive summer teaching academy, followed by a full year employed by a district in a mentored internship, followed, if necessary, by a second summer teaching academy.
- *Route 4: For Individuals Teaching with Conditional Certificates.* Alternative route programs operating Route 4 enroll individuals with baccalaureate degrees, who are employed in the district at the time of application, or who hold conditional teaching certificates. Candidates enrolled in Route 4 attend an intensive summer teaching academy, followed by a full year employed by a district in a mentored internship. If employed on a conditional certificate, the candidate may serve as the teacher of record, supported by a well-trained mentor.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

The PESB has the duty to establish policies for the approval of nontraditional preparation programs and to provide oversight and accountability related to the quality of these programs. The PESB is directed to construct rules with respect to alternative route programs that address the competitive grant process and program design. It is specified that the program design must continue to evolve over time to reflect the innovations and improvements in educator preparation.

In establishing and amending rules for the alternative route programs, the PESB must:

- uphold criteria for alternative route program design that is innovative and reflects evidence-based practice;
- ensure that approved partnerships reflect district engagement in their resident alternative route program as an integral part of their future workforce development, as well as school and student learning improvement strategies;
- provide for the issuance of preservice certification necessary to serve as substitute teachers in classrooms within the residency school for up to 10 days per school year;
- continue to prioritize program designs tailored to the needs of experienced paraeducators and candidates of high academic attainment in the subject area they intend to teach, taking into account school district demand for certain credentials;
- expand access and opportunity for individuals to become teachers statewide; and
- give preference in admissions to applicants who are eligible veterans or National Guard members and who meet the entry requirements.

Beginning December 1, 2017, and each odd-numbered year thereafter, the PESB must report to the Legislature regarding outcomes of the alternative route programs. In considering rules, and reporting outcomes, the PESB must examine the historical record of the data, reporting on:

- the number and percentage of completers hired;
- the percentage of completers from underrepresented populations;
- three and five year retention rates of completers;
- the average hiring dates of completers; and
- the percentage of completers hired in districts where their program was completed.

The statute that spells out, in detail, each of the alternative route programs is repealed. Provisions describing the application proposal for an alternative route program are removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Part of the reason for the teacher shortage is because people who have expertise in shortage fields, but who do not have teaching degrees, are not being brought into the

teaching profession. These individuals can bring valuable content knowledge into the classroom, and common sense. This bill focuses on program outcomes, and allows for program innovations and improvements. It prioritizes districts that have large achievement gaps. This program is outcomes based.

This bill nearly made it through the process last year. There are about 400 people in these programs, which are focused on career changers and experienced paraeducators. The specific program requirements are in statute, which makes it difficult to innovate over time. The design elements should be in rule, as they are for other preparation programs. The statute should continue to require accountability through evidence based outcomes. The PESB should have authority to innovate overtime.

It might be good to require additional data on the district assignment of alternate route completers and the content area they are assigned to teach, in order to inform the state's equity plan. The Superintendent of Public Instruction features the Alternative Routes in the equity plan because individuals going through these programs can immediately fill slots in the classroom.

Paraeducators involved in alternative route programs will come right into special education teaching positions. This allows people to access teaching who would normally not have the means or time to do this type of work. December 1, 2017 is a bit early for retention data because some individuals have just started the program. There is a line about \$500 stipends for mentor teachers, equates to about an hour per month, and this is less than what the mentors are asked to do.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative McCaslin, prime sponsor; Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educators Standards Board; Tony Howard, Richland School District; and Maria Flores, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.