

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5217

As of February 15, 2017

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: Senators Zeiger, Rolfes, Fain, Billig and Wellman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/09/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Repeals the statute that describes the design of each of the alternative route programs, and instead provides the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) with expected outcomes for alternative route programs and rulemaking authority with respect to program design.
- Requires a report from 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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alia Kennedy (786-7405)

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.

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. PESB

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provides technical assistance and guidance in creating strong partnerships, developing clear expectations, identifying how to structure the alternative route programs for greater success, and understanding the regional and state needs of districts.

There are various alternative route programs depending on the candidate's education level and experience, which are provided in statute, as follows:

Route 1: Alternative Routes 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: Alternative Routes 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 and areas with 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 districts, or online or via video-conference over the K-20 network, in collaboration with the higher education partner.

Route 3: Alternative Routes 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 locations. 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: Alternative Routes for Individuals Teaching with Conditional Certificates. Alternative route programs operating Route 4 programs enroll individuals with baccalaureate degrees from, 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 Bill: 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. PESB is directed to construct rules with respect to alternative route programs that address the competitive grant process and eligibility for scholarships in addition to program design. It is specified that program design of alternative route programs 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, 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 ten 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, PESB must report to the Legislature regarding outcomes of the alternative route programs. In considering rules, and reporting outcomes, 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 routes is repealed. Provisions describing the application proposal for an alternative route program are removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: It is unusual to have specific requirements for program design in statute because it makes it difficult to innovate overtime. Instead, requirements for program design should be in rule, with the Professional Educator Standards Board held accountable through program outcomes. This bill allows for greater flexibility. Funding is needed for the pipeline for paraeducators scholarship. Alternative route programs help individuals become teachers who might not otherwise be able to afford to do so through traditional preparation. The grow your own teachers approach is a viable option for filling teaching positions and can produce teachers who already have the cultural competence necessary to be an effective educator in that community. The bill should provide that the Professional Educator Standards Board must better define shortage areas. The bill allows alternative routes to be targeted and tailored to areas of the state where there is a significant teacher shortage and equity gaps, with students disproportionately receiving out of field

educators. Alternative route programs are one strategy for closing equity gaps and addressing hard to fill content areas. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction would like to collect data on assignment of alternative route completers and the areas they are assigned to teach, in order to inform the agency's equity plan.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Marie Sullivan, Richland School District; Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educator Standards Board; Majken Ryherd, Joint Council of Teamsters; Sue Anderson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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