

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5283

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 16, 2017

Title: An act relating to educational staff associate positions.

Brief Description: Concerning the calculation of years of service for educational staff associate positions for salary allocation purposes.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick, Mullet, Rivers, Rolfes and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/09/17, 2/16/17 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the limit on the number of non-school service years that can be counted toward years of service for state salary allocation purposes.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Zeiger, Chair; Fain, Vice Chair; Rolfes, Ranking Minority Member; Mullet, Rivers and Warnick.

Staff: Alia Kennedy (786-7405)

Background: Certificated instructional staff in public schools include both teachers and other professionals, called educational staff associates, who meet certification requirements adopted by the Professional Educator Standards Board. Educational staff associates include occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, nurses, social workers, counselors, and psychologists.

State funding for certificated instructional staff salaries is determined using a salary allocation schedule. The salary allocation schedule provide salary values that increase based on educational attainment and years of service. Each district's certificated instructional staff salary allocation is determined by its respective staff mix, which is a districtwide calculation

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based on the individual salaries of each certificated instructional staff as provided on the salary allocation schedule.

For the purposes of calculating staff mix and allocating salaries for state-funded educational staff associates, the calculation of years of service includes each year of service in a non-school position in the same field of work, up to a limit of two years of non-school service.

Summary of Bill: The limit on years of service in a non-school position for purposes of calculating salary allocations of educational staff associates is removed from statute.

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: School districts are required to employ educational staff associates, many of which have professional degrees and experience beyond what the law currently allows for salary allocation. This bill would make the salary calculation equal to that which is allowed for teachers, and would minimize the need to contract out these positions. Changing the law would allow school districts to compensate for experience and pay for expertise. Schools are missing out on talented employees because professionals are going elsewhere to work so that they can make more money. Educational staff employees need to pay student loans. School districts are contracting these positions out because they are not constrained in how much they can pay contracted individuals. Washington is one of the only states that requires educational staff associates to get an additional certification to work in schools. Schools are having a hard time attracting nurses because the pay is not competitive with what nurses can make in the healthcare industry. Educational staff associate positions are crucial to student success, especially students with special needs. Educational staff associate positions are particularly difficult to fill in remote areas of the state. Some medically fragile students cannot come to school unless there is a nurse present. This is a student safety issue. This bill would allow school districts to hire permanent employees. The chronic shortage of educational staff associates directly effects children with individualized education programs in attaining educational goals because delays or disruptions in services is harmful.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Judy Warnick, Prime Sponsor; Bob Cooper, National Association of Social Workers, Washington Chapter; Jan Galvin, Physical Therapy Association of Washington; Sarah Linton, Washington Speech Language Hearing Association; Marie DeBell, School Nurse Organization of Washington; Rose Moor, Washington Occupational Therapy Association; Elizabeth Price, Educational Service District 112; David Paul, Washington State Special Education Coalition; Mona Johnson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Mary Griffin, Washington State Special Education Coalition.

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