

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5585

As of February 20, 2017

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, Braun, Rolfes, Fain, Saldaña, Frockt, Conway and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/15/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program to focus on increasing the number of early elementary teachers teaching in kindergarten through third grade in Washington.
- Directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the program expansion by January 1, 2027.

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.

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.

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.

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 K-3 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 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 on K-3 teachers, the Legislature intends to achieve the following outcomes:

- increase statewide early elementary teachers in K-3;
- 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; and
- 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, 2027, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee 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.

The expansion of the Future Teacher program expires on July 1, 2027.

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: We need to take a look at how we can recruit and retain our teachers. This bill will address a real problem the state is having in reducing K-3 class size reductions. In a survey of elementary school principals, 60 percent said there was going to be a barrier in reducing K-3 class size because they do not have highly qualified teachers.

OTHER: This bill addresses a piece of the teacher shortage problem. It does not step back and look at the whole thing. This bill could be done in a budget proviso. There is support for the intent of the bill, but there is fear that amending RCW might limit future needs that might arise outside of K-3. Shortage of teachers at any level tend to be cyclical.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kevin Ranker, Prime Sponsor; Robert Butts, OSPI.

OTHER: Bob Cooper, WA Assoc. of Colleges for Teacher Education; Justin Montermini, Professional Educator Standards Board.

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