

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5712

As of February 15, 2017

Title: An act relating to developing a bilingual educational workforce.

Brief Description: Developing a bilingual educational workforce.

Sponsors: Senators Zeiger, Frockt, Saldaña, Warnick, Fain, Walsh, Bailey, Hawkins, Baumgartner, Braun, Schoesler, Hasegawa, Billig, Mullet, Rolfes, Chase and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/13/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Bilingual Educator Initiative to recruit, prepare, and mentor bilingual high school students to become future bilingual teachers and counselors.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to implement initiative pilot projects in four different school districts across the state.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alia Kennedy (786-7405)

Background: Educator Conditional Scholarship and Grant Programs. A conditional scholarship is a loan that is forgiven in whole or in part in exchange for qualified service as a certificated teacher employed in a Washington K-12 public school. The conditional scholarship programs are designed to help school districts recruit teachers, particularly in subject matter and geographic shortage areas. Under most grant and scholarship programs, the state will forgive one year of loan obligation for every two years a loan recipient teaches in a designated shortage area in a Washington K-12 public school.

Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship. The Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship program is available to teachers currently working in a Washington K-12 public school. In order to receive a conditional scholarship, teachers and individuals certificated with an elementary education endorsement must pursue an endorsement in a subject or

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geographic endorsement shortage area, such as mathematics, science, special education, bilingual education, English language learner, computer science education, or environmental and sustainability education. The annual scholarship, which may not exceed \$3,000 in value, is for the cost of tuition, test fees, and educational expenses, including books, supplies, and transportation for the endorsement pathway being pursued.

Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship. The Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship program is designed to encourage into the teaching profession individuals who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement, leadership ability, and willingness to commit to providing teaching service in shortage areas; and who are likely to be good role models for students. Participants in the program incur an obligation to repay the conditional scholarship, with interest and an equalization fee, unless they teach for two years in an approved education program for each year of scholarship received. However, participants who teach in a designated teacher shortage area have one year of loan canceled for each year they teach in the shortage area. The program was last funded in fiscal year 2010 at \$1 million annually.

Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant. In 2016, the Legislature created the Teacher Shortage Conditional Grant program within the Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship program. The purpose of the program is to encourage individuals to become teachers by providing financial aid to individuals enrolled in approved teacher preparation programs. The Washington Student Achievement Council was allocated \$468,000 in 2016 for the purposes of administering the grant program and is scheduled to award its first grants in Spring 2017.

State Need Grant. The State Need Grant is the state's largest financial aid program. The grant program provides need-based financial aid to income-eligible students pursuing postsecondary education. To be eligible, students must have a household income that is less than 70 percent of the state's median family income.

Grant recipients can use the financial aid at eligible higher education institutions in Washington, including public two- and four-year colleges and universities and some accredited private or independent colleges, universities, and career schools.

College Bound Scholarship. The College Board Scholarship was established in 2007 to provide guaranteed four-year tuition to students from low-income families. The first College Board Scholarship awards were granted to students from the graduating high school class of 2012.

Eligibility for the scholarship is a two-part process that includes completion of an application by the end of their eighth grade year, a pledge to complete certain scholarship requirements, and a determination that the student meets the income-eligibility guidelines.

College Board Scholarship recipients that attend public two-year or four-year higher education institutions receive an award to cover the cost of tuition and fees, minus any state-funded grant, scholarship, or waiver assistance, plus \$500 for books and materials. The student must maintain satisfactory academic progress and may not receive the scholarship for more than four full-time years.

Summary of Bill: Beginning in the 2017-2019 biennium, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must administer the Bilingual Educator Initiative, which is a long-term program to recruit, prepare, and mentor bilingual high school students to become future bilingual teachers and counselors.

Pilot projects must be implemented in two school districts east of the Cascade mountains and two school districts west of the Cascade mountains, where immigrant students are shown to be rapidly increasing. With oversight by OSPI, selected districts must partner with at least one two-year and one four-year college in planning and implementing the program. Participating school districts must implement programs, including:

- an outreach plan that exposes the program to middle school students and recruits them to enroll in the program when they begin their ninth grade of high school;
- activities in ninth and tenth grades that help build student agency, such as self-confidence and awareness, the value and benefits of teaching and counseling as careers, and introduction to leadership, civic engagement, and community service; and
- credit-bearing curricula in grades eleven and twelve that include mentoring, shadowing, best practices in teaching in a multicultural world, efficacy and practice of dual language instruction, social and emotional learning, enhanced leadership, civic engagement, and community service activities.

There must be a pipeline to college using two-year and four-year college faculty and consisting of continuation services for program participants, such as advising, tutoring, mentoring, financial assistance, and leadership. High school and college teachers and counselors must be recruited and compensated to serve as mentors and trainers for participating students.

After obtaining a high school diploma, students qualify to receive conditional loans to cover the full cost of college tuition, fees, and books. To qualify for funds, students must meet program requirements developed by their local implementation team, which consists of staff from their school district and the partnering two-year and four-year college faculty. In order to avoid loan repayment, students must:

- earn their baccalaureate degree and certification needed to serve as a teacher or professional guidance counselor; and
- teach or serve as a counselor in their educational service district region for at least five years.

Any students who does not meet these repayment terms may be required to repay all or part of the financial aid they received for college, unless the student is a recipient of funding provided through programs such as the State Need Grant program or the College Bound Scholarship Program.

Funds must be appropriated in 2017 for the purpose of this act.

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: As Washington becomes more diverse and as more languages are spoken, it becomes increasingly important for us to have a bilingual education workforce. This bill takes a positive and meaningful step in the right direction. This bill enables school districts, in partnership with colleges, to begin a program to recruit, train, and mentor students who are bilingual so that they will become future teachers or counselors. This issue is one of the top priorities for the Commission on Hispanic Affairs because of the growing population of students in the transitional bilingual instruction program. Dual language programs have shown to benefit both English and English language learner students. The state lacks bilingual teachers. Instructional aides, not teachers, often provide bilingual instruction. Bilingual guidance counselors are important because they can speak to both the students and the parents who may not speak English. This bill provides a pathway to allow bilingual students to come back to the community and teach, which is especially important in areas struggling to recruit teachers. The bill brings together underrepresented students and teacher training. This bill would have a positive impact on the future of the educator workforce by recruiting more students into careers in education with an emphasis on supporting bilingual students to consider education as a career opportunity. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction seeks clarification on the student scholarship component because those are typically issued by the Washington Student Achievement Council, but it is unclear in the bill which agency would administer that scholarship. The bill needs to clarify how to manage candidate turned graduate degree for counselor certification, because to earn a counselors certification you need a graduate degree but the is not addressed in the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hans Zeiger, Prime Sponsor; Sarah Thornton, Pasco School District; Mea Moore, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Ricardo Sanchez, Commission on Hispanic Affairs; John Boyd, Quincy School District; Alicia Kinne Comstock, Eastern Washington University.

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