

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1593

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to recruiting, preparing, and empowering school officials and holding them accountable.

Brief Description: Establishing a residency provisional principal certification.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlyle, Maxwell, Lytton, Probst, Ladenburg, Anderson, Pedersen, Billig, Dammeier, Wilcox, Dahlquist and Fagan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/15/11, 2/17/11 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to establish a residency provisional principal certification (Provisional Certification).
- Provides that candidates must have demonstrated professional and managerial leadership experience which need not have occurred in a school setting, and are not required to have teaching certificates.
- Directs the PESB to establish standards for alternative route principal preparation programs (Principal Program) that are field-based and offered in partnership with school districts.
- Provides that Provisional Certificate holders are issued regular residency certification once they complete a Principal Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Angel, Billig, Dahlquist, Fagan, Finn, Haigh, Hargrove, Hunt, Kretz, Ladenburg, Maxwell, McCoy, Probst and Wilcox.

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.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Klippert and Liias.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

A growing body of research, much of it supported by the Wallace Foundation, indicates that successful school leadership plays a highly significant role in improving student learning.

Principal Certification. To become certified as a school principal in Washington, individuals must have previously been certified as a teacher, have school-based experience in an instructional role, hold a master's degree, and complete a residency principal certification program approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB).

Principal certification programs must meet operational standards for accountability, program governance, program design, and having an advisory board. Programs must also provide evidence that their candidates demonstrate performance-based standards for knowledge and skills and educational leadership that have been established by the PESB. Principal candidates are also required to serve an internship of at least 540 hours during their certification program.

There are currently 14 PESB-approved principal certification programs, all offered by institutions of higher education.

Alternative Route Preparation. Since 2001, the PESB has approved partnerships of educator preparation program providers and school districts to offer alternative route preparation of teachers. Alternative route teacher preparation programs (Teacher Programs) are intended to attract nontraditional teacher candidates, including paraeducators and other school staff seeking to become certified as teachers and mid-career professionals. Teacher Programs typically combine extensive field-based experience, intensive mentoring, and supplemental coursework that is often offered during the summer, in the evenings, and on weekends. Some Teacher Programs are designed to have the teacher candidate employed under a conditional teaching certificate. Conditional certificates are issued at the request of a school district, for a particular assignment, and for a limited time period.

Organizations such as New Teachers for New Schools and large urban school districts such as Chicago, New York, and Boston have developed alternative route principal preparation programs (Principal Programs). These Principal Programs focus on extensive field-based experience, mentoring, and supplemental coursework and professional development with the intent of attracting nontraditional principal candidates, particularly for inner city and hard-to-serve schools. Most conduct rigorous screening of candidates and require demonstration of previous leadership experience.

Legislation enacted in 2010 requires the PESB to consider applications from non-higher education preparation program providers, including for principal certification. To date, none have applied. There currently is no conditional principal certificate as there is for teachers, nor are there separate provisions in law or rule for Principal Programs.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Alternative Principal Certification. The PESB must establish a residency provisional principal certification (Provisional Certification). Applicants for Provisional Certification must:

- document professional managerial and leadership experience that meets standards established by the PESB;
- complete a record and background check;
- have been admitted to a PESB-approved Principal Program; and
- be recommended by a school district superintendent.

The PESB adopts standards for the required professional managerial and leadership experience, which is not required to have occurred in a school setting.

Before recommending candidates for Provisional Certification, school district superintendents must conduct a publicly announced search for the principalship of a specific school and accept applications from persons seeking Provisional Certification and from regularly certified principals.

Provisional Certificate holders may serve as a school principal only in a single district for not more than three years and must be enrolled in an approved Principal Program. Once a Provisional Certificate holder successfully completes the Principal Program, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction issues a regular residency principal certificate. Principals certified under these provisions are not required to have teaching certificates.

The PESB must adopt standards for approval of Principal Programs, which can be offered by institutions of higher education or non-higher education program providers. Principal Program providers must:

- operate in partnership with school districts;
- develop and use a principal development plan for each candidate that places significant weight on the candidate's prior experience;
- require candidates to demonstrate the performance-based standards for knowledge and skills and educational leadership for residency certification established by the PESB;
- provide intensive mentoring of at least one-half year with an additional time if necessary; and
- demonstrate a record of success in principal preparation, or if a new Principal Program, submit a record of success in preparation of other educators and the appropriate knowledge of faculty and instructors.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Provisions are removed that encourage school boards and superintendents to provide principals with increased autonomy and authority. Provisions are removed that extend to all school districts, laws that establish a different standard for superintendents to transfer principals to a lower certificated position in the district after they have been a principal for

three years. Currently these laws apply only to districts with more than 35,000 students. A null and void clause is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 17, 2011.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The philosophical foundation of this bill is that great leadership matters. Great leadership at the building level has the opportunity to open a much deeper conversation about student outcomes, the dynamics of the building, and how resources are used. It is fundamental to provide both higher accountability and higher authority to make leadership decisions. Under this bill, a prospective principal still has to go through the PESB-approved training and meet all of the same competencies for certification. This simply offers the opportunity to open a dialogue with people who have great leadership skills from other areas, and provide them with appropriate learning experiences in the field before putting them in charge of a building.

Alternative routes to teacher certification have worked tremendously to bring in non-traditional candidates. Why should this not be extended to principals? Research shows that the most important factor in student achievement in a school is the teacher, closely followed by the principal. This bill would expand the pool and infuse the system with a fresh supply of potential school leaders. There are successful Principal Programs in other states. Principals from a different professional background can be effective leaders of a school. Other qualities in addition to being an instructional leader are important. These qualities can be cultivated from a wider variety of backgrounds and experience.

(Neutral) Research shows that John Stanford was one of the state's most gifted superintendents, and he was not a teacher. Superintendents should be free to select individuals with managerial and professional experience even if they lack a narrow education certificate. Principal leadership is limited by not allowing them to manage budgets and personnel in the building.

(In support with concerns) This bill honors the role and responsibility of the PESB to set standards, but instructional leadership is an important characteristic of any principal. The PESB will work to ensure that instructional leadership is respected as a qualifying standard for becoming a principal under a Principal Program.

(With concerns) The concept of Principal Programs and Provisional Certification are supported, but not the provisions that disregard educational experience requirements. A principal is fundamentally different from a superintendent. A superintendent is a Chief

Executive Officer. A principal manages the day-to-day enterprise of the education of children.

(Opposed) Teachers who have spent their careers working in challenging schools know the importance in student learning of a strong instructional leader. A strong principal must be an effective instructional coach who helps teachers reflect on their practice and continually improve the craft of teaching. This leadership can only come from someone who has firsthand knowledge of how to be an effective teacher, not from someone who has read a book. This bill would allow anyone with basic management skills to become a principal regardless of any knowledge about education. This devalues the profession of educators.

Alternative routes to certification are not opposed, but there is strong belief that principals must come from an instructional background. Principals must have demonstrated their own competencies before judging the competencies of the teachers in their building. These are skills that can only be learned through classroom experience. Removal of the provisions dealing with transfer to a subordinate position is supported.

The PESB is already discussing alternative certification; they should be allowed to complete their work. Principals are more than just good building managers. There are concerns about principals being charged with evaluating teachers and improving student learning without any knowledge of instruction. Leading a school is not like managing a store, leading the troops, or overseeing an office; it is a unique responsibility. Other Principal Programs spend significant time up-front preparing non-traditional candidates. Candidates are not just put into the building without a background in instruction. This bill does not have any minimum educational requirements for a principal.

Principals spend 75 percent of their time doing instructional activities. They must have credibility. The concern is not that someone without an education background could not learn, but that this must be learned before the individual sits in the principal's chair. Core knowledge and skills must be developed before entering the building. Each of the eight criteria on the new principal evaluation system require intensive background in instructional leadership. Many schools are using Response to Intervention models, which requires the principal to assign the best teachers to the most challenging students, analyze student data, and ensure correct placements of special education students. Being a principal is a multi-faceted job that is gaining more and more layers every year.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Carlyle, prime sponsor; Anne Moore, Steinar Kristoffersen and Heather Cope, League of Education Voters; Anne Luce, Partnership for Learning; and Dave Powell, Stand for Children.

(Neutral) Liv Finne, Washington Policy Center.

(In support with concerns) David Brenna, Professional Educator Standards Board.

(With concerns) Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

(Opposed) Andrea Gamboa, Nationally Board Certified Teacher; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Dan Steele, Washington Association of School Administrators; Jerry

Bender, Association of Washington School Principals; Jennifer Shaw, Franklin Pierce High School; and Karen Owen, Nisqually Middle School.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.