

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5537

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to teacher preparation.

Brief Description: Changing teacher preparation provisions.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Pelz, Rasmussen, Kohl and Wojahn; by request of Board of Education).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/21/95, 3/24/95 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chairman; Elliot, Vice Chairman; Johnson, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Poulsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clements; G. Fisher; Hatfield; McMahan; Pelesky; Quall; Radcliff; Smith; Talcott; B. Thomas; Thompson and Veloria.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: The State Board of Education (SBE) is generally responsible for establishing requirements for becoming a teacher in the State of Washington. In several cases, however, the Legislature has adopted specific requirements.

Preparation program admission basic skill test

One such requirement specifies that an applicant must successfully pass a basic skills test before entering a teacher preparation program. To pass, the student must have a score equal to the state-wide median score on a general skills test. Exceptions are provided for those who have a bachelor's degree, or who are at least 21 and have demonstrated competency through two years of college level course work and a written essay.

Teacher certification assessment

Another legislative requirement, which is intended to be implemented in May 1996, will require individuals applying for initial teacher certification to pass an assessment

before they receive certification. However, the SBE is authorized to develop this only if the Legislature specifically appropriates funds to cover the cost of developing the assessment. If no funds are provided, the assessment will not be required.

Other requirements

The Legislature also has adopted requirements pertaining to required coursework in child abuse, higher education faculty involvement in K-12 classrooms, and has instructed the SBE and others to take other specific actions regarding teacher preparation and certification. In addition, a statute enacted in 1917 required normal schools to have extension departments to provide training and assistance to teachers. While teacher training and assistance continues to be needed, this specific requirement, which now applies to the regional universities and The Evergreen State College, is considered obsolete.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Preparation program admission basic skill test

The requirements for admission to teacher preparation programs are changed. While students are still required to demonstrate competency in basic skills, the decision regarding how competency will be determined is delegated to the SBE. A specific provision in statute is deleted that requires applicants younger than 21 years of age to have at least the state-wide median score on a general achievement test.

Teacher certification assessment

A current law that requires a teacher assessment, subject to legislative funding, is repealed.

By January 1, 1997, the SBE is directed to make recommendations to the Legislature on: (a) how to link a teacher assessment with performance-based preparation program approval standards; (b) how to link a teacher assessment to the performance-based public education system; and (c) whether the assessment should be required as a diagnostic tool instead of a certification requirement.

Any recommendation to implement a teacher assessment must be approved by the Legislature before such implementation occurs.

Other Requirements

The following statutes either encouraging or requiring the SBE to take certain actions are repealed: 1) encouraging instruction in child abuse issues in teacher preparation programs; 2) requiring the board to review ways to strengthen cooperative agreements between public schools and institutions of higher education; 3) requiring plans to increase interactions between higher education faculty and K-12 teachers; 4) requiring review of the interstate agreement on the qualifications of educational personnel; and 5) creating an administrator internship task force. In addition, statutes are repealed

that require The Evergreen State College and regional universities to establish an extension department for teacher training and in-service.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: A provision was added that requires the SBE to make recommendations regarding a teacher test. Current language that requires a teacher test for new teachers, subject to funding, was repealed. A requirement that regional universities maintain teacher extension departments was repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested by the Senate on January 25, 1995.

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

Testimony For: This legislation should be amended to have the State Board of Education analyze issues pertaining to a teacher test, and to require the Legislature to approve any teacher test before it is required.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Dorene Mykol, State Board of Education (support, with amendment); and Bob Fisher, Washington Education Association (support, with amendment).