

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2326

As Passed House:

February 6, 1996

Title: An act relating to demonstrating basic skills for entrance into a teacher preparation program.

Brief Description: Changing requirements for admission to teacher preparation programs.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Radcliff, Brumsickle and Carlson; by request of Board of Education).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/16/96, 1/25/96 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/6/96, 96-1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chairman; Elliot, Vice Chairman; Johnson, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clements; Fuhrman; Hatfield; Linville; McMahan; Pelesky; Poulsen; Quall; Radcliff; Smith; Talcott; B. Thomas and Veloria.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Thompson.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: Under current law, an individual may not be admitted into a teacher preparation program without first demonstrating that he or she is competent in the basic skills of oral and written communication and computation.

Competency in basic skills can be demonstrated by

- having a BA or graduate degree; or

- having completed two or more years of college-level course work, having demonstrated competency through college-level course work and a written essay, and being over the age of 21; or
- having a combined score equal to or greater than the statewide median score on a general achievement test.

Concerns have been expressed that requiring individuals 21 years of age or less to have a combined score equal to or greater than the statewide median score on general achievement tests unnecessarily excludes otherwise qualified individuals from admission into teacher preparation programs. Also, it is argued that achievement tests, such as the SAT, do not accurately measure basic skills.

Summary of Bill: Current law is modified regarding how an applicant to a teacher preparation program must demonstrate competency in basic skills. Instead of only applicants who are over 21 years of age, all applicants may demonstrate competency in the basic skills through the completion of two or more years of college-level course work and a written essay. Also, applicants may demonstrate competency through an examination specifically designed to assess basic skills.

Competency in reading is added to the list of basic skills that must be demonstrated by applicants prior to admission.

The state Board of Education is directed to make recommendations by January 1997 as to whether a single uniform test of basic skills should be required for admission to teacher preparation programs and as a requirement for out-of-state teachers applying for certification in Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Whether or not an individual is older than 21 should not be a factor in deciding how to measure competency in basic skills. The state board is addressing basic skills competency in all phases of teacher preparation and certification.

Testimony Against: None

Testified: Representative Radcliff, prime sponsor; Roberta May and Larry Davis, State Board of Education; and Judy Hartmann, Washington Education Association.