

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6645

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to the future teachers conditional scholarships for classified employees and other future teachers.

Brief Description: Extending the future teachers conditional scholarship program for classified employees and modifying the program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Eide, Swecker, Brown, Rasmussen, McAuliffe, Goings, Patterson, Hochstatter, Zarelli, Kohl-Welles, Finkbeiner, Shin and Bauer; by request of Governor Locke and Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/22/00, 2/23/00 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Eligibility is expanded to include K-12 classified employees who do not hold a Washington teaching certificate.
- Increases annual award amount from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per student.
- Allows recipients who teach in an area of the state identified as having a teacher shortage to have one year of the loan canceled for each year they teach in such an area.
- Adds an equalization charge to the scholarship balance and clarifies how interest rates and monthly payments are determined.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair; Lantz, Democratic Vice Chair; Radcliff, Republican Vice Chair; Dunn; Edmonds; Esser and Gombosky.

Staff: Erika Prager (786-7120).

Background:

The future teachers conditional scholarship program was created in 1987. The program was designed to attract individuals into the teaching profession who demonstrated outstanding academic achievement and who are likely to be good role models for students.

A small number of students who wish to become teachers could receive up to \$3,000 per year for up to five years to attend an accredited public or independent institution of higher education in Washington. Participants incur an obligation to repay the scholarship, with interest, unless they teach in Washington's public schools for two years per year of loan received.

For the past several years, the Legislature has not allocated any new money for the future teachers conditional scholarship. The Governor has recommended in his 2000 supplemental budget proposal that \$885,000 in funding be allocated to provide conditional scholarships to 200 teachers, particularly in the areas of math, science, and special education.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The future teachers conditional scholarship is modified.

Eligibility

Program eligibility is expanded to include K-12 classified employees who do not hold a Washington teaching certificate.

Award

The annual award amount is increased from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per eligible participants beginning in the 2000-01 academic year. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) may adjust the annual award based on the increase in resident tuition at the public four-year research universities.

Repayment Obligations

Recipients who teach in an area of the state identified as having a teacher shortage by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will have one year of the loan canceled for each year they teach in such an area. Recipients who teach in an area of

the state not identified as having a teacher shortage will have one year of the loan canceled for every two years they teach.

Recipients who do not fulfill their teaching obligation must repay the conditional scholarship, with interest and an equalization charge. This charge is equal to not more than 3 percent of the remaining unforgiven balance. The interest rate on new loans is determined annually by the HECB and should parallel current rates for undergraduate students under the primary federal loan program. The minimum monthly payment is determined by the HECB, but is not less than \$50 per month. An account for the future teachers conditional scholarship is created in the custody of the state treasurer.

Program Administration

The HECB is also responsible for publicizing the program, including special efforts to recruit under represented populations to apply. Membership of the applicant screening committee is expanded to include representatives of classified employees.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendment removed the ability for the board to defer the repayment requirements for classified employees and eligible students as defined by RCW 28B.10.017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The primary change is the inclusion of classified employees for eligibility. Classified employees already know what is expected of them as teachers. There are 20,000 para-educators in Washington. There are also other school employees that enjoy children and watch teachers everyday. They love the work they do and want to go on to become teachers. It allows for flexibility in filling teaching positions in areas of the state with a teacher shortage. Currently, there is shortage in the areas of math, science, and special education. OSPI already reports teacher shortage areas to the federal government so there is no cost in determining which areas have shortages. The equalization charge was added to discourage students from loan shopping and encourage students who really want to teach.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Eide, prime sponsor; Bruce Botka, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Carolyn Busch, Office of the Governor/Office of Financial Management; Joyce Rangila, Public School Employees; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Federation of

Teachers; and Sarah Corrie, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.