

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5413

As Passed Senate, March 10, 1999

Title: An act relating to teacher assessment for certification.

Brief Description: Incorporating teacher assessment into the certification system.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Rasmussen, Benton, Winsley, Bauer, Kohl-Welles and Haugen; by request of Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Governor Locke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 1/25/99, 2/15/99 [DPS, DNPS].
Passed Senate, 3/10/99, 44-4.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5413 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Bauer, Benton, Brown, Finkbeiner, Goings, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Sellar and Swecker.

Minority Report: Do not pass substitute.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Generally, a person teaching in a public or approved private school in Washington State must have a teaching certificate. Applicants for teacher certificates must meet certain requirements, including completion of a teacher preparation program.

To enter into a teacher preparation program, a person must demonstrate competency in the basic skills of reading, oral and written communication, and computation. Competency may be demonstrated in a variety of ways:

- by passing a basic skills exam;
- by completing a baccalaureate or graduate degree program;
- by completing two years of college-level courses and a written essay; or
- by scoring higher than the statewide median score on an approved general achievement test.

Summary of Bill: The State Board of Education (SBE) must make assessments available to be used as an entrance requirement into a SBE-approved teacher preparation program and as a requirement for an initial teaching certificate. The assessments must be in the following areas and on the following timelines:

Type of Assessment	Available	Required
Basic skills	September 1, 2000	September 1, 2001 (for admission into a Washington preparation program; for initial teaching certificate for out-of-state candidates)
Knowledge of teaching	September 1, 2001	May 1, 2002 (for residency certification)
Subject knowledge	September 1, 2001	May 1, 2002 (for residency certification)

By January 1, 2000, an advisory committee comprised mostly of teachers, including K-12 administrators and representatives of institutions of higher education, must make recommendations to SBE regarding the development or selection of the knowledge of teaching and the subject knowledge tests. SBE must either approve the recommendations or disapprove the recommendations and request new recommendations. SBE and SPI may contract for the development and implementation of the assessments. SBE determines the minimum scores required for passing the basic skill assessment. The advisory committee must recommend to SBE the minimum scores required for passing the knowledge of teaching and the subject knowledge tests.

Unless funds are appropriated, applicants for admission to state teacher preparation programs, and applicants for initial teaching certificates must pay a fee to take the assessments. The fees must be "reasonably related" to the costs of implementing the assessments. Fee revenues must be deposited into a new account and expended to implement the assessments.

SBE must annually report on the success rate of candidates who take the assessments. The report must be available through the state library and over the Internet.

The current state entrance qualifications for teacher preparation programs are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 1999.

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

Testimony For: Passing a test is not the only prerequisite to making a good teacher, but it will show that a teacher has met a qualifying standard. Requiring the passing of an assessment to enter a teacher preparation program and to obtain a teaching certificate will improve the current college programs and improve the credibility of the teaching profession. The assessments will provide valuable information to employers. The decision to request this legislation was made collaboratively. These assessments will complete the new performance standards and certification system required by the State Board of Education.

Testimony Against: Washington already has a process that ensures the high quality of the students who enter into teacher preparation programs and of the teachers who seek certification. The tests required under this bill are disconnected from a real classroom experience. Written tests do not permit a demonstration of some of the most important skills necessary to be a successful teacher. This expense will not give you the guaranteed return that you are looking for. Requiring these tests does not promote education reform, it abandons it.

Testified: PRO: Lorraine Wilson, WSSDA; Susan Truningham, WACPTS; Ted Andrews; Kathleen Anderson, SBE; Jennifer Wallace, Governor's Office; Robert Betts, OSPI; Randy Dorn, (pro with concerns); Jodie Butler, WEA (concerns); CON: Michael Vavrus.