

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1607

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to high-quality alternative routes to teacher certification.

Brief Description: Creating alternative routes to teacher certification.

Sponsors: Representatives Anderson (co-prime sponsor), Haigh (co-prime sponsor), Talcott, Quall, Keiser, Kenney, Schual-Berke, Edmonds, Rockefeller, McIntire, O'Brien, Darneille and Santos; by request of Governor Locke; Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/7/01, 2/26/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates two new alternative routes to teacher certification through mentioned internships that provide college graduates who do not have teaching degrees with a chance to become teachers after working for a year with experienced educators.
- Creates a new route to teacher certification for classified school employees with community college associate degrees who work with special education or bilingual students.
- Provides stipends for the mentor teachers and stipends and conditional scholarships for interns.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Anderson, Republican Vice Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Cox, Ericksen, Keiser, McDermott, Pearson, Rockefeller, Santos, Schindler, D. Schmidt and Schual-Berke.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By law, Washington's public and private school teachers must hold valid teaching certificates provided by the state. The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes and enforces the rules for those certificates. Applicants for teacher certification must have completed state-approved college or university teacher preparation programs, hold appropriate degrees and licenses, and complete any additional course work required by the SBE.

A person who does not have a teaching certificate may teach in public schools under limited circumstances. The SBE issues instructional specialist certificates to persons of unusual distinction or exceptional talent in a particular field. The board also issues conditional certificates to persons who are highly qualified and experienced in the subject matter to be taught and temporary permits to individuals who are waiting for documentation of proof of completing normal certification requirements. Each of these certificates are temporary and carry restrictions.

In 2000 the Legislature created the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to advise and provide recommendations on issues affecting educators. The PESB was also given a specific charge to provide recommendations for at least two high-quality alternative routes to teacher certification by December 1, 2000. The PESB submitted recommendations for three alternative routes, including recommendations for funding support and implementation.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A statewide Partnership Grant program and the Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship program are created to support three alternative routes for teacher certification. Each route focuses on increasing the number of teachers in shortage and high need areas due to subject matter or geographic location.

Eligibility for Alternative Route One. The teacher candidate must meet the following requirements:

- seek an endorsement in special education or English as a second language;
- be a classified instructional staff person with three years of experience in that role;
- have an transferable associate degree;
- meet the age, good moral character, and personal fitness requirements for teachers;
- pass the statewide basic skills exams, when available.

Eligibility for Alternative Route Two. The teacher candidate must meet the following requirements:

- seek an endorsement in a state identified subject or geographic shortage area;
- be a classified instructional staff person with three years of experience in that role;
- have a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
- Pass the state basic skills and content tests once they are available;
- meet the age, good moral character, and personal fitness requirements for teachers;
- pass the statewide basic skills exams, when available.

Eligibility for Alternative Route Three. The teacher candidate must meet the following requirements:

- seek an endorsement in either a state identified subject matter shortage area or in a subject that is taught in middle school, junior high, or high school, with priority given to candidates in subject matter shortage areas;
- have five years experience in the work force and not be currently employed in the school district;
- have a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
- demonstrate successful experiences with students or children (which may be shown by letters of reference);
- meet the age, good moral character, and personal fitness requirements for teachers;
- pass the statewide basic skills and content exams, when available.

Partnership Grant Program: To the extent funds are provided for this purpose, school districts may partner with the regional educational service district and higher education teachers' preparation programs to provide one or more of the three alternative route programs. Each of the alternative route programs must provide a full-time mentor in the classroom with the teacher candidate until the candidate demonstrates competency necessary to manage the classroom with part-time supervision and guidance from the mentor. At the completion of the program, successful candidates will be eligible for teacher certification. The programs may enroll candidates beginning in January 2002.

School districts may apply for grant funds to be used for stipends for the teacher candidates and the mentors by submitting a proposal to the PESB. Using specified criteria, the PESB, with support from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, will select the districts to receive the partnership grants. The amount of the grant will not exceed money generated by the BA+0 cell on the state salary schedule. Interns will receive at least 80 percent of the stipend amount.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy must evaluate the Partnership Grant program and submit to the PESB an interim evaluation by December 1, 2002, and a final

evaluation by September 1, 2005.

Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program: To the extent funds are provided, the PESB will award conditional scholarships to interns in any of the alternative routes. The scholarship award covers up to \$4,000 of the tuition cost for the alternative route in which the recipient is enrolled. The conditional scholarship provides one year of loan forgiveness in exchange for two years of teaching in a Washington public school. If the recipient fails to teach in a Washington public school, then the individual must repay the scholarship with interest.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is authorized to adopt rules, collect and manage repayments, and accept grants and donations for the conditional scholarship program.

The Partnership Grant program and the Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship program expire June 30, 2005.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Route three candidates may seek endorsements in any subject shortage area and non-shortage secondary subject areas. Interns will receive 80 percent of the stipend amount generated by the BA+O cell. Route three candidates are also eligible for scholarships. The amount of intensive mentoring an intern must receive is clarified, the criteria that will be used to evaluate candidates is described, and technical corrections are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on original bill.

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

Testimony For: For years, policymakers have worked to find a way to provide a high-quality training program for experienced professionals who wish to become teachers without going back to college for an education degree. This legislation provides that opportunity. Through a paid internship, it will partner these talented professionals with experienced teachers who can help them acquire the instructional and classroom management skills that they will need to become effective educators. The program was designed after extensive research showed that teachers who are trained through this model perform at least as well as teachers who are trained through traditional programs. It will help Washington fill open teaching positions in subjects that have a shortage of qualified teachers. It will also provide a way for classified staff to become teachers and for school districts to "grow their own teachers." The focused, collaborative approach designed into

this program will ensure that school districts, institutions of higher education, and the teacher candidates will all benefit from it. It will help second career professionals become teachers since they will be able to continue earning a modest living while they acquire their teaching certificate. It will also provide a career path for the dedicated classified staff who have already shown their ability to work within a school setting to enrich the lives of children and help them learn and grow. Finally, it will not be a permanent program unless it is sufficiently successful that the Legislature chooses to extend it.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Haigh, co-prime sponsor; Representative Anderson, co-prime sponsor; Tom Charouhas, Professional Educators Standards Board; Kristen Bunce, Governor's Office; Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educators Standards Board; Rebecca Bowers, Central Washington University; Fritz Erickson, Eastern Washington University; Bob Watt, Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce; Lynn Nixon, Agilent Technologies; Judy Hartmann, Tacoma Public Schools; Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Larry Davis, State Board of Education; Gary King, State Board of Education; Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals; Glenn Gorton, Public School Employees; Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators; Randy Hathaway, Washington School Personnel Association; Cheryl Ellsworth, Seattle Public Schools; and Lin Douglas, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.