

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1607

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, March 21, 2001

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

Brief Description: Creating alternative routes to teacher certification.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by 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 and Superintendent of Public Instruction).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 3/19/01, 3/21/01 [DPA-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner, Kastama, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: By current law, Washington's public and private school teachers must hold valid teaching certificates provided by the state except in limited circumstances. The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes and enforces the rules for those certificates.

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 Amended 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 an identified subject or geographic shortage area;
- be a classified staff person with three years of experience in that role;
- have a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university. The individual's post-secondary grade point average may be considered as a selection factor;
- 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 an identified subject or geographic shortage area or in a subject that is taught in middle school, junior high, or high school, with priority given to candidates seeking endorsements in shortage areas;
- have five years experience in the work force and not be currently employed in the school district, but may hold an emergency substitute certificate;
- have a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university. The individual's post-secondary grade point average may be considered as a selection factor;
- 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, 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 significant time for mentor teachers to be in the classroom with the teacher candidate until the candidate demonstrates competency necessary to manage the classroom with less supervision and guidance from the mentor. At the completion of the program, successful candidates are 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, selects 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 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 Legislature, Governor, State Board of Education, and PESB an interim

evaluation by December 1, 2002, and a final evaluation by December 1, 2004. If the evaluation is not specifically funded in the budget, then the section requiring the evaluation is null and void.

Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program: To the extent funds are provided, the PESB awards 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.

Amended Bill Compared to Second Substitute Bill: The amendment clarifies that the mentor and the supervisor from the higher education teacher preparation program must both agree that the candidate is able to have less intensive supervision before the level of supervision is diminished and agree whether the candidate has successfully completed the program and is eligible for residency certification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available (on original bill).

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, Section 8 is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: This bill provides a tool for local school districts to address the teacher shortages that they are experiencing. The alternative routes in this bill provide needed options for people to obtain a teaching certificate and still ensure high standards for the teaching profession. The specificity of the House bill will not hinder the program. To make the program work will require that there are top quality mentors for the alternative route candidates, especially for route three. Additionally, the school principal needs to be involved in the supervision and evaluation of the teacher candidate. The bill does not reflect the advisory relationship of the Professional Educator Standards Board to the State Board of Education.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jennifer Wallace, PESB; Kristin Bunce, Governor's office; Greg Williamson, OSPI; Rainer Houser, AWSP; Larry Davis, SBE; Barbara Mertens, WASA; Gary King, WEA; Dan Steele, WSSDA.