

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5695

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 12, 2001
Ways & Means, March 6, 2001

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

Brief Description: Creating alternative routes to teacher certification.

Sponsors: Senators Eide, Finkbeiner, McAuliffe, Franklin, Hewitt, Rasmussen, Johnson, Shin, Patterson, Oke, Winsley and Kohl-Welles; by request of Governor Locke and Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/1/01, 2/12/01 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/27/01, 3/6/01 [DP2S].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5695 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner, Hewitt, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Rasmussen and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5695 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Brown, Chair; Constantine, Vice Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Fraser, Hewitt, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Sheahan, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Winsley and Zarelli.

Staff: Bill Freund (786-7441)

Background: In 2000, the Legislature created the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (WPESB) to advise and provide recommendations on issues affecting educators. The WPESB 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 WPESB submitted recommendations for three alternative routes, including recommendations for funding support and implementation.

Summary of Second 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. To access state funding, the teacher candidate must meet the following requirements:

- seek an endorsement in special education or English as a second language;
- have three years experience as a para-educator and be currently employed as a para-educator;
- have an 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. To access state funding, the teacher candidate must meet the following requirements:

- seek an endorsement in an identified subject or geographic shortage area;
- have three years experience in a classified staff position and be currently employed in a classified staff position;
- have a bachelor of arts or science degree;
- once the state content test is available, successful completion of the content test;
- 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 identified subject shortage area, except special education or English as a second language;
- have five years experience in the work force;
- have a bachelor of arts or science degree;
- once the state content test is available, successful completion of the content test;
- demonstrate successful experiences with students or children, (which may be shown by reference letters);
- meet the age, good moral character, and personal fitness requirements for teachers;
- pass the statewide basic skills exams, when available.

School districts may enroll candidates who are seeking endorsements in non-shortage areas; however, these candidates are not eligible for state funds under the Partnership Grant program.

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 a 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. 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 WPESB. The WPESB, with support from the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, selects the districts that receive the partnership grants according to specified factors.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy must evaluate the Partnership Grant program and submit an interim evaluation to the WPESB, the Legislature and the Governor by December 1, 2002, and a final evaluation by December 1, 2004.

Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program: To the extent funds are provided, the WPESB awards conditional scholarships to eligible para-educators and other classified staff accepted in alternative routes one or two. The scholarship award covers up to \$4000 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 State K-12 public school. If the recipient fails to teach in a Washington public school, then the individual must repay the scholarship principal with interest.

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

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

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The stipend amount limitation under the Partnership Grant program is eliminated.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute adds additional intent language. Technical amendments changing outdated or incorrect terminology are made. Language is added to clarify that the alternative routes lead to a residency or initial teaching certificate, that the mentorship supervision will continue throughout the internship, and that the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction administers the partnership grant program. The requirement that an individual entering alternative route 2 or 3 must have a 2.75 grade point average is changed to permit the board to consider the GPA as a factor. School employees are permitted to participate in alternative route 3. The evaluation by the Washington Institute for Public Policy will be provided to the Legislature and the Governor, in addition to the Washington Professional Educators Standards Board. The date for the final evaluation is changed to occur before the expiration of the program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2001.

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

Testimony For: This bill provides expedient, flexible high-quality alternative routes with the necessary financial incentives for a smooth transition from a non-teaching position into a teaching position. It will help address the shortages of teachers that we are currently experiencing without sacrificing high standards. The mentoring component and professional growth plans will provide the critical support that will help ensure that people who enter the

teaching profession through these alternative routes will be successful teachers and remain in the profession.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Eide, prime sponsor; Kristin Bunce, Governor's Office; Tom Charouhts, Jennifer Wallace, Prof. Stands. Board; Rainer Houser, AWSP; Gary King, Tom Morris, WEA; Larry Davis, SBE, Greg Williamson and Lynn Douglas, OSPI; Dwayne Slate, WSSPA; Barbara Mertens, WASA; Judy Hartmann, Tacoma School District; Cheryl Ellsworth, Seattle Public Schools; Doug Nelson, Debbie Hutchinson, Beth Hall, PSE.