

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5312

As Passed Senate, February 24, 2015

Title: An act relating to creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.

Brief Description: Creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, McAuliffe, Dammeier, Rolfes, Mullet, Billig, Kohl-Welles, Keiser and Chase; by request of Governor Inslee.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/29/15, 2/05/15 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/24/15, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Fain, Mullet, Rivers and Rolfes.

Staff: Matthew Lemon (786-7405)

Background: The Professional Educator Standards Board offers a conditional scholarship to current K–12 teachers and individuals having an elementary education certificate but who are not employed in positions requiring their certificate to pursue endorsements in high-demand mathematics and science endorsement areas. Current K–12 teachers may use the conditional scholarship money to pursue endorsements in secondary mathematics or science, or both, and middle-level mathematics or science, or both. Individuals with an unused elementary education certificate may use the conditional scholarship money to pursue endorsements in middle-level mathematics or science, or both. Each conditional scholarship recipient may receive up to \$3,000 per fiscal year for each conditional scholarship obtained to pay for endorsement tests and any observation or applicable coursework needed to attain the new endorsement.

The conditional scholarship is a loan that is forgiven for teacher service in the same endorsement area a scholarship recipient obtains certification. Teaching service must be in a Washington K–12 public school. The state forgives the loan obligation entirely if the

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recipient teaches in the endorsement area for two years per each scholarship they obtain. Teachers may receive multiple loans if they are pursuing endorsements in both mathematics and science.

Summary of Bill: The Retooling to Teach Mathematics and Science Conditional Scholarship Program is renamed the Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship Program.

Current K–12 teachers and individuals holding an elementary school education certificate may receive a conditional scholarship to pursue special education, bilingual education, or English language learner, computer science education, or environmental and sustainability education endorsements, in addition to mathematics and science endorsements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Student demographics and needs are changing and teachers need to be well prepared in order to ensure that students have every opportunity to succeed. There are critical shortages in areas of need and these areas are broader than when the program started. School districts are looking to increase the availability of bilingual educators and there is a shortage in special education teachers as well. There is a growing STEM gap in the areas of computer science and environmental and sustainability science that needs to be addressed in the new knowledge-based economy. Some schools cannot offer AP courses in computer and environmental science due to a lack of teachers with endorsements in those areas. Expanding the scholarship will encourage more teachers to pursue endorsements in critical areas. The program fills a need in districts and allows teachers to advance their careers. The program allows a teacher to add a course or class to fill part-time needs in districts and schools without adding a large expense.

OTHER: There is a need for increased capacity throughout the education continuum. Higher education's role is to prepare teachers for the classroom and this program would expand this critical function to new shortage areas. There is great need in specific regions and subject areas. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is conducting a regional analysis that will look at local demand for educators. This scholarship will help reduce financial barriers and boost the capacity of the state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Marcie Maxwell, Governor's Office; Gene Sementi, West Valley School District; Becca Kenna-Schenk, Francisco Rios, Western WA University; David Brenna, Professional Educator Standards Board; Jim DePaepe, Central WA University; Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn.

OTHER: Maddy Thompson, WA Student Achievement Council.