

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6217

As Passed Senate, February 5, 1996

Title: An act relating to demonstrating basic skills for entrance into a teacher preparation program.

Brief Description: Changing requirements for admission to teacher preparation programs.

Sponsors: Senators Johnson and McAuliffe; by request of Board of Education.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 1/18/96, 1/19/96 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/5/96, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Hochstatter, Johnson, Pelz and Rasmussen.

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Background: Under current law, an individual may not be admitted into a teacher preparation program without first demonstrating that he or she is competent in the basic skills. A person must earn a combined score on tests of general achievement equal to the statewide median.

A person does not have to take the general skills test if the person:

- has a BA or graduate degree;
- is over 21 and has completed two or more years of college level course work or can demonstrate competency through college level course work and a written essay.

Summary of Bill: Current law is modified regarding how the applicant must demonstrate competency in the basic skills.

All applicants regardless of age may demonstrate competency through completion of two or more years of college level course work and a written essay.

Also, applicants may demonstrate competency through an examination specifically designed to assess basic skills required for oral and written communication and computation.

Current law is unchanged, and competency may be demonstrated through a baccalaureate or graduate degree.

The requirement for a passing score on tests of general achievement (designated as the SAT or ACT by rule of the State Board) is deleted, but may be used to demonstrate competency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill clarifies the methods that applicants to the teaching profession can demonstrate competency in basic skills. The issue of how competency is demonstrated may be raised again as new methods of demonstrating competency are developed.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Kathleen Anderson, State Board of Education (pro); Judy Hartmann, WA Education Association (pro).

House Amendment(s): Reading is added to the list of basic skills that must be demonstrated before admission to a teacher preparation program. The State Board rules must address the needs of applicants who have a documented specific learning disability when taking the basic skills examination to enter a teacher preparation program. The State Board of Education, by January 31, 1997, must make recommendations regarding establishing a uniform test of basic skills as a requirement for admission to a teacher preparation program.