

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1045

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to cooperating teachers.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to cooperating teachers.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero, Talcott, Quall, Wensman, Carlson, Hatfield, Anderson, Stensen, Keiser, Kessler, Dunshee, Wolfe, Dickerson, Ogden, Lantz, Rockefeller, Regala, Scott, Wood, Kagi, Morris, McIntire and Fortunato.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/27/99, 2/18/99 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- If funding to pay stipends to public school teachers who are supervising student teachers is included in the budget, the money will be distributed by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) .
- If funding for stipends is included in the budget, colleges and universities must continue to support cooperating teachers at the previous year's funding level.

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; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Schindler, Republican Vice Chair; Carlson; Cox; Keiser; Rockefeller; Santos; D. Schmidt; Schual-Berke; Stensen; Sump and Wensman.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

In order to graduate from an approved teacher education program in Washington, students must participate in an internship, usually called student teaching. The student teaching internship usually lasts for at least ten weeks. Each student teacher spends those weeks observing an experienced teacher and teaching classes under the supervision of that teacher. The supervising teacher is often called a cooperating teacher. In addition to supervision by the cooperating teacher, student teachers are also observed and assisted by professionals from the college that the students attend. Although the student teaching model usually involves one cooperating teacher working with one student teacher, some colleges are moving toward different student teaching models. In one model, the student teaching experience lasts much longer than 10 or so weeks. In another, a team of cooperating teachers works with teams of student teachers.

School districts and institutions of higher education usually adopt agreements that define the level of compensation cooperating teachers will receive. As a result, the stipends received by cooperating teachers vary significantly.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

If funding to pay stipends to cooperating teachers is provided in the state budget, money for the stipends will be distributed by the OSPI to teachers through the district that employs the teachers. If the stipends are funded directly through the budget, the money will be used to supplement money currently provided to cooperating teachers by colleges and universities with approved teacher education programs. The colleges and universities must provide stipends and other forms of monetary assistance at no less than the level of support provided the previous year. The additional money may be used for higher stipends, material and supplies, and tuition assistance or academic scholarships.

The following terms are defined: cooperating teacher, student teacher, and student teaching.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The state board will not adopt a variable payment schedule for cooperating teachers. The definition of cooperating teacher is revised. Cooperating teachers are excellent, not superior teachers, with at least four instead of five years of experience. Reference to a cooperating teacher's skills in applying the state's Essential Academic Learning Requirement's is removed and replaced. The new language states that a cooperating teacher must hold high expectations of students and have the ability to help students achieve at high levels and meet the district's and state's academic standards. If funding for stipends is provided in the omnibus appropriations act, colleges and universities must continue to provide additional financial assistance to cooperating teachers at the previous year's funding levels.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (Original Bill) If the state wants to improve the training of future teachers, the best teachers need to be selected as cooperating teachers. The definition of cooperating teacher in this legislation will help improve the quality of cooperating teachers. In addition, requiring colleges to pay reasonable stipends to cooperating teachers will help to compensate those teachers for the significant amount of time and effort they give to the education of student teachers. The current system results in inequities in the amounts of money cooperating teachers receive. Student teachers pay tuition to their colleges and universities for the student teaching experience. Those tuition dollars should be shared with the cooperating teachers who are actually acting as adjunct professors while the students are in the teachers' classrooms.

Testimony Against: (Original Bill) The education and supervision of student teachers is an expensive, labor intensive enterprise for colleges and universities. Accreditation agencies require colleges to have one supervising faculty member for every 18 student teachers. Some or more of the state's institutions of higher education spend more to support student teachers than the student pays in tuition. For students enrolled in state supported institutions of higher education, the cost is more than the combination of student tuition and state support. The legislation would permit a system of variable stipends that will differ based on the colleges the students attend. The legislation includes private colleges, so the state is telling private colleges how to spend their budgets.

Testified: (Support) Rep. Romero, prime sponsor; Gary Girst, teacher; Gary King, Washington Education Association; Kay O'Sullivan, teacher; Larry Davis, State Board of Education; Rainer Houser, Association of Washington School Principals; and Bob Butts, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(Opposed) Martha Lindley, Central Washington University; and Marget McGuire, Washington Colleges of Teacher Education.