

FINAL BILL REPORT

EHB 2760

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Promoting standards for educator quality.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Carlson, Lovick, Constantine, Regala, Haigh, Tokuda, Linville, Keiser, Stensen, Conway, Wood, Morris, Kenney and Ogden; by request of Governor Locke.

Senate Committee on Education

Background:

By law, as part of its duties, the State Board of Education (SBE) sets requirements for teachers, administrators, and educational staff associates in four major areas: preparation, assessment, certification, and standards of practice. Since the early 1990's, the SBE has been moving toward a performance-based system for the preparation and certification of teachers. One foundation of the performance-based certification system envisioned by the board is the establishment of a series of assessments that will permit potential teachers to demonstrate their competency in three areas: basic skills, knowledge in the subjects they plan to teach, and pedagogy or teaching skills. The 1995 Legislature directed the board to study and report on some of the implementation issues associated with creating assessments for persons seeking initial or residency teaching certificates. The legislation required the board to report to the Legislature on the results of the study by January 1, 1997. The legislation also required the board to obtain legislative approval before implementation of any certification assessments. Every year since 1997, the SBE has requested legislative authorization to implement an assessment system for new teachers.

Since 1987, students who wish to become teachers have been required to demonstrate competency in certain basic skills before they are admitted to teacher preparation programs. These potential teachers must demonstrate competency in the basic skills of oral and written communication, reading, and computation. They may demonstrate that competency in a variety of ways, including successful completion of an examination of basic skills, completion of a baccalaureate or graduate degree program, completion of two years of college or by earning a combined score of more than the statewide median score of all persons taking the test in the prior school year.

Summary of Bill:

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is created to serve as the sole advisory body to the SBE on issues related to educator certification and to develop and implement tests for newly certified educators. The PESB is given rule making authority for its testing responsibilities.

The Professional Educator Standards Board includes 20 members representing different facets of the education profession. Of the 20 members, seven will be public school teachers, one will be a private school teacher, four will be administrators, two will be educational staff associates, three will represent teacher preparation programs, one will be a parent, and one will be a member of the public. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the board. The other nineteen members will be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Each of the four major caucuses of the legislature are required to nominate one or more public school teachers to serve on the PESB. The governor is required to select one teacher from each of the four caucus lists. The nineteen members appointed by the governor will serve staggered terms of four years, not to exceed a total of two consecutive full terms. The requirements for the various positions are described.

The PESB will develop a basic skills test for persons entering teacher preparation programs and out-of-state teachers seeking initial or residency certification. The test will be mandatory for both categories of potential teachers beginning August 1, 2002. The PESB may accept an alternative basic skills test for out-of-state teachers and graduate students in masters degree level preparation programs.

The PESB will also develop subject matter tests for each endorsement area. The tests, which do not include teaching methodology, will be mandatory for those seeking either residency or professional certificates after September 1, 2003. The PESB, with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, may contract with a testing company for the development or purchase, and evaluation of the tests. Before the tests are implemented, the board will report on them to the legislative education committees for the committees' review and comment. Applicants for teacher certification and applicants to teacher preparation programs may be charged a fee for the tests. If a fee is charged, it will be paid directly to the contractor providing the test.

The PESB will advise the SBE and OSPI on issues concerning educator recruitment, hiring, preparation, certification, mentoring and support, professional growth, assessment, evaluation, retention, and governance. The PESB will report on these issues annually to the Governor, certain legislative committees, SBE and OSPI. The board must submit a separate report by December 1, 2000, recommending two or more high-quality alternate routes to certification.

The PESB may hire an executive director and assistant who, for administrative purposes only, will be housed in the OSPI.

By January 1, 2001, the Washington Institute for Public Policy will report to the Governor, legislative committees, and others with its findings and recommendations on the governance of educator certification, licensure and preparation and on the scope of authority of the PESB over these and other educator quality issues.

The current laws on basic skills tests are repealed on September 1, 2002.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 88 10
Senate 36 11

Effective: June 8, 2000