

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1893

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to certification of teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.

Brief Description: Providing for a certification endorsement for teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives McDermott, Kenney and Dickerson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/23/05, 3/1/05 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/15/05, 96-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/15/05, 44-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the State Board of Education to develop a teaching endorsement for teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Santos, Shabro and Tom.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

During 2003, the House Children and Family Services Committee assembled a work group on deaf education in Washington. The work group's purpose was to consider the respective roles of and relationships among the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD), local school districts, educational service districts, community services, and community resources in the delivery of effective education to hearing impaired children throughout the state. In addition, the work group considered different appropriate service delivery models for hearing impaired children.

The work group included representation from parents and teachers of hearing impaired children, the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), educators, the Board of Trustees of the WSD, the Washington Sensory Disabilities Services, and the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program. In addition, four members of the Senate, a member of the House Education Committee, and the members of the House Children and Family Services Committee served on the work group.

The work group held three meetings over the course of the interim to discuss a range of issues, including service delivery in the state from newborn hearing screening and early intervention services through the P-12 system, technological advances relating to hearing impairment, and research on outcomes and costs related to hearing impairment. At its final meeting, the members developed consensus statements that reflected the basic principles agreed upon by all of the members of the work group. They also adopted goals and policy recommendations based upon those consensus statements. One of the goals of the work group was the certification of teachers who have the educational and communication skills required to meet the needs of hearing impaired students.

The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes certification requirements for teachers and educational staff associates. Teachers must be endorsed in a particular area of expertise from a list adopted by rule by the SBE. Special Education is one of the endorsements available to teachers. An endorsement in the specialty area of education designed exclusively for hearing impaired students is not included on the list of permissible endorsements.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The SBE, with advice from the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), will develop endorsement requirements for teachers of hearing impaired students. The standards for the endorsement will be based on the skills and knowledge necessary to serve the education and communication needs of these students. When establishing the rules for the endorsement, the board will consider special education endorsement requirements to have been met by applicants who intend to teach hearing impaired students if the applicants have a baccalaureate or master's degree from a teacher training program that has been approved by the Council on Education of the Deaf.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

Requires the state board of education to adopt certification requirements for school district employees who provide sign language translation for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Defines these employees as educational interpreters. Requires educational interpreters, by 2009, to pass written and performance assessments and, by 2012, to become nationally certified by the National Association of the Deaf Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Requires the automatic certification of educational interpreters who have a

baccalaureate degree in teaching or educational interpreting, hold national certification, and pass an assessment established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This legislation was created as a result of a legislative task force on the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Deaf students need well qualified teachers who can both communicate in sign language and teach a rigorous curricula that will give students the skills to be successful academically. This legislation will help prepare those teachers.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative McDermott, prime sponsor; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; and Lynn Maier and Jan Sorenson, Washington Public Employees Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.