

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2989

As of February 22, 2006

Title: An act relating to establishing the Washington teach math-science program to increase the number and enhance the preparation of secondary school mathematics and science teachers.

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington Teach Math-Science program.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Kenney, Cox, Sells, Chase, Ericks, Hasegawa, Takko, Haler, Rodne, Hunter, Quall, McCoy, Santos, Green, Schual-Berke, Springer, Dickerson, Simpson and Hudgins).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/09/06, 97-1.

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/22/06.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

Background: Conditional Scholarships: In 1987, Washington created the Conditional Teachers' Scholarship Program administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). Recipients received scholarships for up to five years in the form of a loan. Loan repayment was forgiven at a rate of one year of repayment for every two years the recipient taught in a K-12 public school in Washington. The Legislature provided funding of \$300,000 per year for the program until 1994.

In 2004, the Conditional Teachers' Scholarship Program was reactivated and a conditional loan repayment component was added. The program now provides priority for participants seeking certification or additional endorsement in math, science, technology, or special education. The program's selection criteria also emphasize bilingual ability and a willingness to commit to providing teaching service in shortage areas. "Shortage area" means a shortage of teachers in a specific subject, discipline, or geographic area as defined by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The scholarship amount awarded is the amount of tuition and fees paid by the participant, with a maximum equal to resident undergraduate tuition and fees at the University of Washington. Scholarship recipients who teach in a shortage area have one year of conditional scholarship forgiven for every year of teaching. All other recipients have one year forgiven for every two years of teaching. Recipients who fail to meet the teaching service obligation must repay the scholarship plus interest.

The loan repayment component of the program allows the HECB to agree to repay a student's federal student loans in exchange for teaching service. Each year, participants must provide evidence of teaching service in order to receive a loan repayment. The HECB may pay the participant directly or arrange to pay the holder of the student loan. The selection criteria,

repayment limits, and ratio of loan repayment to required teaching service are the same as for the conditional scholarship program.

For 2005-06, there were 357 applicants for 60 awards. Of these awards, 45 were conditional scholarships and 24 were through the conditional loan repayment program.

Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program: The Legislature has created four alternative routes for teacher certification. Each route focuses on increasing the number of teachers in shortage and high need areas due to subject matter or geographic location. Routes one and two are available to classified instructional employees who are not employed by the school district. Route three is available to people who are not employed by the school district, but have an emergency substitute certification. Route four is available to district employees who have a baccalaureate degree, and hold a conditional teaching certificate or emergency substitute certificate.

Since its creation in 2001, the Legislature has funded a Conditional Teachers' Scholarship Program that supports the alternative route certification. In the 2005-06 school year, there are 109 people participating in the alternative route program. Of these, 93 received conditional scholarships.

Summary of Bill: The Washington Teach Math-Science Program is created. The program has four components: 1) teacher preparation programs; 2) a public-private advisory committee; 3) targeted conditional scholarships and loan repayments; and 4) targeted alternative routes conditional scholarships and loan repayments.

The HECB and the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) will jointly select two institutions of higher education to develop and implement a comprehensive program to prepare secondary math and science teachers. The programs must be in place by fall 2007 and must include a streamlined curriculum allowing students to earn a bachelor's degree and residency certification in secondary math or science within four academic years. The program must also include math recruitment and outreach to prospective students who have expressed an interest in math and science, internship experiences, and best practice seminars. The institutions selected to implement the program may partner with community or technical colleges in the development and implementation of the program's requirements.

The HECB must create an advisory committee of representatives from the institutions of higher education that are developing the program and business and community leaders to solicit and accept grants and donations. The committee will identify and develop industry-based professional development and internship opportunities for students, advise the board on the development of rules regarding expenditures for these opportunities, and authorize such expenditures.

Beginning July 1, 2006, the HECB will increase the number of conditional scholarships awarded under the future teachers conditional scholarship and loan repayment program to eligible participants who plan to teach secondary math or science by as many eligible applicants as the appropriation will sustain, with a goal of at least 70 additional awards. Teachers who receive funds for teaching secondary math or science will have one year of the loan cancelled for each year taught in secondary math or science.

Beginning July 1, 2006, the number of alternative route conditional scholarships awarded to eligible participants who plan to teach secondary math or science will be increased by 30 more than were awarded for the 2005-06 school year. For every year a participant teaches math or science in a district with a documented shortage of math or science teachers, one year of his or her loan will be cancelled.

The Washington Teach Math-Science Professional Development Account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. Grants and donations received for authorized professional development opportunities must be deposited into this account. Only the HECB Director or designee may authorize expenditures for professional development opportunities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. Revised fiscal note requested on February 21, 2006.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: We graduate less than 600 math and science teachers per year, and not all remain in the state and teach. The demand is somewhere around 1200 new math and science teachers. The advisory committee will help new teachers to have exposure to actual workplaces for internships (such as Microsoft) so that they will be able to better assist their students to know what is really needed for them to be prepared for careers in math and science. The need for teachers, especially those who are incented to participate in math and science, is great. The HECB looks forward to its work to implement the act. The PESB is very supportive of the increase in alternative route conditional scholarships; in the past four years there have been 191 endorsements earned in math or science through these alternative routes. There is a concern that the one year of teaching requirement per year of scholarship for math or science teachers is inconsistent with the general requirement of two years of teaching per year of scholarship received under an alternative route conditional scholarship. Some institutions of higher education already allow students to complete the requirements to become a teacher within four years; the issue is often that the student is not prepared for the courses and that they do not progress with the course sequence as quickly as they should. Scholarship money should follow the student.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; John Klacik, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Nasue Nishida, Professional Educator Standards Board; Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

CON: No one.