

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1178

As of March 20, 2013

Title: An act relating to authorizing alternative assessments of basic skills for teacher certification.

Brief Description: Authorizing alternative assessments of basic skills for teacher certification.

Sponsors: Representatives Lytton, Maxwell, Santos, Seaquist, Reykdal, Sullivan, Fitzgibbon, Ryu, Pollet, Stanford, Tharinger and Jinkins.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/04/13, 57-40.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/20/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Katherine Taylor (786-7434)

Background: The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is a 13-member board responsible for establishing requirements for state certification of educators and approving educator preparation and certification programs.

Current law requires passage of a basic skills test for admission to approved teacher preparation programs and for persons from outside the state applying for a Washington teaching certificate. The basic skills that are assessed in this test must include at least reading, writing, and mathematics.

PESB established the Washington Educator Skills Test Basic (WEST-B) as the requirement for admission to PESB-approved teacher preparation programs in August 2002. This test is also required for persons from outside the state seeking a Washington State residency teaching certificate. The WEST-B contains three sub-tests that measure basic skills in reading, mathematics, and writing. Passage of all three sub-tests is required to meet the WEST-B requirement.

Summary of Bill: PESB may identify and accept other tests and test scores for admission to approved teacher preparation programs and for out-of-state Washington teaching certificate applicants.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

These alternative tests must be comparable in rigor to the basic skills assessment and candidates must meet or exceed the basic skills requirements established by the board.

PESB must submit tests and test scores to the education committees of the Legislature for review and must provide an opportunity for the Legislature to act before the tests are implemented.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is only one kind of test for becoming a certified teacher. The WEST-B does not cover the subjects you will teach. Candidates of great promise and from under-represented groups do not see why they need to take another basic skills test. Looking at the ACT and SAT should be enough. You can open up our pool of applicants. We do not want this delayed by a year, which could be a possible amendment. We are ok with using the average national score for the ACT and SAT. We need more diverse teachers. This will open a door. Students pay for the WEST-B themselves. The Legislature gets to look at the tests. The Washington Educator Skills Test Endorsement covers content that will be taught.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jennifer Wallace, PESB; Frank Ordway, League of Education Voters; Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn.