

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2720

As Passed House:

February 14, 2004

Title: An act relating to school district superintendent credential preparation programs.

Brief Description: Concerning school district superintendent credential preparation programs.

Sponsors: By Representatives Kenney, McCoy, Pearson, Dunshee, Schual-Berke, Cooper, Kristiansen, Chase and Morrell; by request of State Board of Education.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/30/04, 2/4/04 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/14/04, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes a limitation that, among public institutions of higher education, only the University of Washington or Washington State University may offer training for certification as a school superintendent.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt, Chase, Condotta, Jarrett, McCoy, Morrell and Ormsby.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The State Board of Education (SBE) has authority to issue certificates for school personnel, including school administrators. Administrator's certificates are available for principals, program administrators, and superintendents. Earning a certificate is not the same as earning an academic degree, although the two may be issued simultaneously.

The qualifications for school superintendents are set exclusively by local school boards, but a board could require its superintendent to be state certified. At a minimum, the SBE requires a master's degree and completion of an approved superintendent preparation program. Among public institutions of higher education, state statute permits only the University of Washington (UW) or Washington State University (WSU) to offer training for certification as a school superintendent.

The five SBE-approved programs are at the UW Seattle, all campuses of WSU, Gonzaga University, Seattle University, and Seattle Pacific University. Only the UW program is exclusively a doctoral program; each of the other programs permits candidates to complete the certificate in conjunction with a master's degree or through post-master's degree study.

Summary of Bill:

The limitation is removed that only the UW or WSU among the public institutions of higher education may offer training for certification as a school superintendent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: There is a serious need to support and train superintendents for our public schools. Over the next five years, almost one-third of superintendents will be eligible to retire. This bill extends to public universities the same option already available to independent colleges. It does not mean a university will offer a program; they still have to figure out whether they can support it academically and financially, and they still have to seek approval from the State Board. Western Washington University has been approached over the years to offer a program for students in the northwestern corner of the state. The current prohibition raises an access issue for the region.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Larry Davis, State Board of Education; Kristine McDuffy, Western Washington University; and Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.