

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2043

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to establishing the recruiting diverse Washington teachers program.

Brief Description: Establishing the recruiting diverse Washington teachers program.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Upthegrove, Ericks and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/20/07, 2/23/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to develop a curriculum and guidelines for a program to encourage diverse high school students to consider a teaching career in a shortage area.
- If funding is available, authorizes the PESB to provide grants to design and deliver the program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, McDermott, Roach, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

According to the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), approximately 93 percent of teachers are Caucasian, compared to 74 percent of students. Approximately 13 percent of individuals who complete teacher preparation programs each year are people of color. One of the findings of a comprehensive review by the PESB of the state's teacher preparation system was a lack of a strategic recruitment approach to increasing diversity among educators. The

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.

PESB suggested that additional ways should be examined to encourage students of color to pursue a career in teaching. The Legislature enacted a minority teacher recruitment program in 1989, but it is no longer funded even though the authorizing statute remains.

One existing program for encouraging high school students to consider a career in teaching is the Washington State Teachers Recruiting Future Teachers (WSTRFT) program. The WSTRFT program is a curriculum developed in the mid 1990s that is offered as an elective in approximately 120 high schools across the state. It includes classroom observations, lesson planning, child development, and other pre-teaching activities primarily geared to elementary education. The WSTRFT program is not currently operated by any institution of higher education or organization; rather, it is a loose affiliation of interested educators. There is no particular emphasis on recruiting diverse teachers or recruiting teachers in shortage areas such as mathematics and science.

Summary of Bill:

The Recruiting Diverse Washington Teachers (RDWT) program is created, to be administered by the PESB. Program components include:

- targeted recruitment of diverse high school students to encourage them to consider becoming future teachers in mathematics, science, bilingual education, special education, and English as a second language;
- a curriculum that includes classroom observations and pre-teaching internships at all grade levels and covers such topics as lesson planning, learning styles, the achievement gap, and cultural competency;
- academic and community support to help diverse students overcome possible barriers to becoming a future teacher; and
- future teacher camps held on college campuses.

The PESB develops the curriculum and program guidelines in consultation with an advisory group. If funding is made available, the PESB allocates grant funds to partnerships of high schools, teacher preparation programs, and community-based organizations to design and deliver RDWT programs. The PESB must also conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of current strategies and programs for recruiting diverse teachers in Washington and in other states.

The minority teacher recruitment program enacted in 1989 is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (In support) The achievement gap is not only large, but it has not changed over the last ten years or more even though there have been numerous efforts to focus on the needs of struggling students, especially students of color and those with different cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Research is being done on the positive impacts of teachers of color teaching students of color. Diversifying the teacher workforce has broad societal implications. The statistics are not positive. There are simply not enough teachers of color. This bill is not the only answer, but it does take a crucial first step in the right direction. One of the strategic goals of the colleges of education is to increase the diversity of teacher candidates. All 22 colleges stand ready to partner with this program and make diligent efforts to find possible candidates. Students need to see themselves directly reflected in their schools. Teachers of color serve as role models for all students and can be cultural brokers with students' parents.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Santos, prime sponsor; Jeanne Harmon, Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession; Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; Michael Itti, League of Education Voters; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; and Nasue Nishida, Professional Educator Standards Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.