
**State Government & Tribal
Affairs Committee**

ESSB 5269

Brief Description: Establishing the first peoples' language and culture teacher certification program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Delvin, Kauffman, Roach, Franklin, Rasmussen, Kohl-Welles, Sheldon, Marr, Murray, Oemig, Jacobsen, Rockefeller, Shin and Kilmer).

<p>Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes the First Peoples' Language and Culture Teacher Certification Program.

Hearing Date: 3/28/07

Staff: Colleen Kerr (786-7168).

Background:

In 2003, the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) adopted a rule creating the First Peoples' Language/Culture Certification Pilot Program (Pilot Program). The intent of the three-year Pilot Program was to:

- contribute to the preservation, recovery, revitalization, and promotion of First Peoples' language;
- provide an opportunity for tribal children to learn and share their native language at public schools;
- promote cultural sensitivity for all students; and
- provide tangible implementation of the 1989 Centennial Accord between Washington and the sovereign tribal governments in the state.

The Pilot Program was set to expire at the end of the 2005-06 school year. In 2005, however, jurisdiction over educator preparation and certification transferred from the SBE to the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) as a result of legislation. In May 2006, the PESB

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provided a one-year extension of the Pilot Program. Then, in January 2007, the PESB voted to make the program permanent.

To date, government-to-government agreements for the pilot program have been signed with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Jamestown S'Klallam Indian Tribe, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, the Makah Tribe, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, the Skokomish Indian Tribe, the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Tulalip Tribes of Washington, the Suquamish Tribe, and the Kalispel Tribe of Indians. Through these agreements 20 teachers have been certified to teach eight different tribal languages.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State First Peoples' Language and Culture Teacher Certification program is established in statute. The act may be known as the "First Peoples' Language/Culture Teacher Certification Act: Honoring our Ancestors."

PESB will adopt rules to implement the program in collaboration with sovereign tribal governments that choose to participate. Participating tribal governments may certify individuals who meet the tribe's criteria. Before certifying an individual, the tribal government must conduct a background check through the tribal police departments within Washington State. The tribal government will send to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) the background check information and other information necessary for the individual to receive a state certificate. The OSPI must conduct a background check through the Washington State Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation before awarding a state certificate. The individual must be certified by both the tribal government and the OSPI to teach the languages and cultures designated on the certificate and no other subjects under this certification.

Individuals with this certification meet the definition of a "highly qualified teacher" of the federal No Child Left Behind act when teaching First Peoples' Language and Culture, subject to approval by the federal Department of Education. Teaching certificates awarded under the pilot language/culture program remain valid.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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