

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## EHB 2607

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As of February 26, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to preparing teachers to teach English language learner students.

**Brief Description:** Requiring the professional educator standards board to convene a work group regarding English language learner students.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Santos, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Anderson, Lantz, Hudgins, Upthegrove, Sullivan, Chase, Darneille and Simpson.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/13/08, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/21/08.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Roman Dixon (786-7438)

**Background:** The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reports that 76,966 students were enrolled in the Transitional Bilingual Program (TBP) as of April 2007. Transitional bilingual instruction is a system of instruction which uses two language skills to enable the pupil to achieve competency in English. When the use of two languages is not practicable the TBP instruction may include English as a second language.

Legislation enacted in 2007 created a demonstration project for improving English Language Learners (ELL) instruction. Funding was provided for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) to study the competencies for developing academic English skills that all classroom teachers should acquire in initial teacher preparation programs and through professional development. An interim report is due November 1, 2008.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is tasked with establishing policies and requirements for: the preparation and certification of educators that provide standards for competency in professional knowledge and practice in the areas of certification; and a foundation of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to help students with diverse needs, abilities, cultural experiences, and learning styles to meet or exceed state learning goals.

**Summary of Bill:** The PESB must convene a work group to develop recommendations for increasing teacher knowledge, skills, and competencies to address the needs of ELL students. The work group must identify gaps and weaknesses in the current teacher preparation and competencies regarding understanding how students acquire language, how to teach academic content in English to non-English speakers, and demonstrating cultural competence. In

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addition, the work group must be informed by demonstration projects, research, and the evaluation by the NWREL.

The work group must include representatives from the Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; school districts with significant populations of ELL students who speak a single language; school districts with significant populations of ELL students who speak multiple languages; classroom teachers; English as a second language teachers; bilingual education teachers; principals; the Migrant and Bilingual Education Office at OSPI; and the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The PESB must invite participation by the NWREL.

The work group must submit a report by December 1, 2008, to the Governor and the education and higher education committees of the Legislature. The report must consist of findings and specific recommendations regarding improving teacher preparation knowledge and skills' standards and teacher competencies in the identified areas.

**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 on Engrossed Bill:** PRO: This legislation is necessary due to the severe shortage of ELL teachers that we've experienced in recent years. This bill forces us to look at how current ELL teachers are being trained in hopes of providing a more effective education to ELL students to ensure that they keep up with their peers. OSPI definitely supports this bill. Surveys show that teachers hit the classrooms feeling unprepared to teach ELL students. The PESB also supports this bill.

OTHER: The House budget did not fund this bill. Without the funds, PESB can't do it. We encourage the Senate Education Committee to keep this language with SB 6673 as a last hope.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Santos, primary sponsor; Nasue Nishida, PESB; Isabel Munoz-Colon, OSPI.

OTHER: Nasue Nishida, PESB.