

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6726

As Passed Senate, February 13, 2008

Title: An act relating to the professional educator standards board establishing a professional-level certification assessment.

Brief Description: Granting the professional educator standards board ongoing authority to establish professional-level certification assessments and performance standards.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Tom, McAuliffe and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/4/08, 2/6/08 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/13/08, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6726 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Eide, Hobbs, Holmquist, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig, Rasmussen, Weinstein and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 2002 the Legislature authorized the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to contract for assessments to determine the basic skills and subject knowledge of teacher certification applicants, with the applicant fee to be paid directly to the contractor.

In 2007 the Legislature directed the PESB to set performance standards and implement a uniform and externally administered professional-level certification assessment based on demonstrated teaching skills. However, the language was not codified and did not amend the section of the law that authorizes the PESB to contract for the assessment and permit the collection of fees by the contractor.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The exact language that was passed last session is codified. The PESB must implement the uniform and externally administered professional-level certification assessment by January 2010. Additionally, the PESB is authorized to contract for the professional-level certification assessment and permit the collection of fees charged to be paid directly to the contractor.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 Original Bill: PRO: The professional certification program is a highly valued process for educators. After completing the pro-cert program, teachers find they are more intently focused on the impact of their lessons with the students. The requirement for a uniform, external assessment, which was passed last year, is to provide greater uniformity to the pro-cert process. There have been uneven requirements and applications of the program across the state at the different higher education institutions that have a pro-cert program. The PESB has been working towards implementing the direction given by the Legislature last year, but the PESB found that the board needs this technical fix to move forward.

OTHER: We would like to offer an alternative to requiring the external, uniform assessment. Upon completion of a professional teacher certification program at a Washington institution of higher education, a candidate could instead be required to meet a common set of program outputs that would be consistently applied by the institutions. The Superintendent of Public Instruction and the PESB could develop the process and outputs. This would also permit the PESB data to evaluate the strengths and robust nature of each of the programs. If this were done, then you could lower the amount of fees that certification candidates would have to pay, and would not have to authorize the Board to work with vendors.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Rodney Tom, prime sponsor; Corie Hancock, teacher, North Thurston Public Schools; Nasue Nishida, PESB; Judy Hartmann, Governor's Policy Office.

OTHER: Dan Bishop, Washington Colleges of Teachers Education.