
Education Committee

HB 1593

Brief Description: Establishing a residency provisional principal certification.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlyle, Maxwell, Lytton, Probst, Ladenburg, Anderson, Pedersen, Billig, Dammeier, Wilcox, Dahlquist and Fagan.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to establish a Residency Provisional principal certification (Provisional Certification)
- Provides that candidates must have demonstrated professional and managerial leadership experience which need not have occurred in a school setting, and are not required to have teaching certificates.
- Directs the PESB to establish standards for alternative route principal preparation programs that are field-based and offered in partnership with school districts.
- Provides that Provisional Certificate holders are issued regular Residency certification once they complete an alternative route principal preparation program.
- Extends to all school districts, rather than applying only to districts with more than 35,000 students, provisions of law that establish a different standard for superintendents to transfer principals to a lower certificated position in the district.

Hearing Date: 2/15/11

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

A growing body of research, much of it supported by the Wallace Foundation, indicates that successful school leadership plays a highly significant role in improving student learning.

Principal Certification. To become certified as a school principal in Washington, individuals must have previously been certified as a teacher, have school-based experience in an

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instructional role, hold a master's degree, and complete a Residency principal certification program approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB).

Principal certification programs must meet operational standards for accountability, program governance, program design, and having an advisory board. Programs must also provide evidence that their candidates demonstrate performance-based standards for knowledge and skills and educational leadership that have been established by the PESB. Principal candidates are also required to serve an internship of at least 540 hours during their certification program.

There are currently 14 PESB-approved principal certification programs, all offered by institutions of higher education.

Alternative Route Preparation. Since 2001, the PESB has approved partnerships of educator preparation program providers and school districts to offer alternative route preparation of teachers. Alternative route programs are intended to attract non-traditional teacher candidates, including paraeducators and other school staff seeking to become certified as teachers and mid-career professionals. Alternative route programs typically combine extensive field-based experience, intensive mentoring, and supplemental coursework that is often offered during the summer, in the evenings, and on weekends. Some programs are designed to have the teacher candidate employed under a Conditional teaching certificate while in the program. Conditional certificates are issued at the request of a school district, for a particular assignment, and for a limited time period.

Organizations such as New Teachers for New Schools and large urban school districts such as Chicago, New York, and Boston, have developed alternative route principal preparation programs. These programs focus on extensive field-based experience, mentoring, and supplemental coursework and professional development with the intent of attracting non-traditional principal candidates, particularly for inner city and hard-to-serve schools. Most conduct rigorous screening of candidates and require demonstration of previous leadership experience.

Legislation enacted in 2010 requires the PESB to consider applications from non-higher education preparation program providers, including for principal certification. To date, none have applied. There currently is no Conditional principal certificate as there is for teachers, nor are there separate provisions in law or rule for alternative route preparation for principals.

Principal Performance. The same 2010 legislation established a new standard for school districts to transfer principals to a subordinate position (e.g., another certificated position with lower pay) after three years of employment as a principal, based on the superintendent's determination that the results of the principal's performance evaluation provide a valid reason for the transfer. No probationary period is required, but support and an attempt at remediation are required. A final decision by the school board to transfer the principal cannot be appealed. These provisions apply only in school districts with more than 35,000 students and to principals hired after June 10, 2010. For other school districts, principals can be transferred to a subordinate position only within the first three years of employment as a principal. Otherwise, this would constitute an adverse action against the principal's contract.

Summary of Bill:

Alternative Principal Certification. The PESB must establish a Residency Provisional principal certification (Provisional Certification). Applicants for Provisional Certification must:

- document professional managerial and leadership experience that meets standards established by the PESB;
- complete a record and background check;
- have been admitted to a PESB-approved alternative route principal certification program (Program); and
- be recommended by a school district superintendent.

The PESB adopts standards for the required professional managerial and leadership experience, which is not required to have occurred in a school setting.

Before recommending candidates for Provisional Certification, school district superintendents must conduct a publicly announced search for the principalship of a specific school and accept applications from persons seeking Provisional Certification and from regularly-certified principals.

Provisional Certificate holders may serve as a school principal only in a single district for not more than three years and must be enrolled in an approved Program. Once a Provisional Certificate holder successfully completes the Program, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction issues a regular Residency principal certificate. Principals certified under these provisions are not required to have teaching certificates.

The PESB must adopt standards for approval of Programs, which can be offered by institutions of higher education or non-higher education program providers. Program providers must:

- operate the Program in partnership with school districts;
- develop and use a principal development plan for each candidate that places significant weight on the candidate's prior experience;
- require candidates to demonstrate the performance-based standards for knowledge and skills and educational leadership for Residency certification established by the PESB;
- provide intensive mentoring of at least one-half year with an additional time if necessary; and
- demonstrate a record of success in principal preparation, or if a new Program, submit a record of success in preparation of other educators and the appropriate knowledge of faculty and instructors.

Principal Authority. School district boards of directors and superintendents are encouraged to provide principals with increased autonomy and decision-making authority, including over personnel and budgets in their schools.

Principal Performance. The provisions of a 2010 law that allow superintendents to transfer principals to a subordinate position after three years of employment, without the transfer being considered an adverse action against the principal's contract, are extended to all school districts for principals hired after the bill's effective date.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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