

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1341

As of March 15, 2017

Title: An act relating to professional certification for teachers and school administrators.

Brief Description: Concerning professional certification for teachers and school administrators.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Bergquist, McCaslin, Stonier, Muri and Pollet).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/17, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/14/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to adopt rules for the professional administrator certification that are substantially similar to the professional development credit option for professional teacher certification.
- Requires PESB to adopt rules that provide teachers with a third option to become professionally certified, including a new professional development credit option.
- Establishes the Professional Certification Collaborative to review the integration of, and smoothen the transitions between, educator certificates, and to make recommendations on how to improve and strengthen the pathways that lead to highly effective educators at each level of the public school system.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alia Kennedy (786-7405)

Background: Professional Educator Standards Board. Established by the Legislature in 2000, the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is a 12-member board that adopts rules and creates policies for the preparation and certification of educators. PESB's statutory duties include the following:

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- establishing policies and practices for the approval of programs of courses, requirements, and other activities leading to educator certification, such as for teachers and school administrators; and
- specifying the types and kinds of educator certificates to be issued and the conditions for certification.

Administrator Certificates. Washington has two levels of certification for administrators, principals and program administrators: residency and professional. To obtain a residency administrator certificate, applicants must complete an approved administrator preparation program, have documented successful school-based experience in an instructional role with students, and hold, or have held, a valid residency or professional teacher or educational staff associate certificate. To obtain a professional administrator certificate, applicants must hold a residency administrator certificate, complete an approved professional administrator certificate program, and complete coursework in issues of abuse. In addition, principals must have documentation of three contracted school years of employment as a principal or assistant principal.

There is currently no national principal certificate.

Teacher Certificates. Washington also has two levels of certification for classroom teachers: residency and professional. To obtain a residency teacher certificate, applicants must complete an approved teacher preparation program and pass a basic skills test and a content knowledge test. To obtain a professional teacher certificate, applicants must either: (1) have at least two years of successful teaching experience and complete the ProTeach Portfolio, an external, uniform assessment adopted by PESB; or (2) have at least three years of experience and become certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which offers a voluntary advanced teaching credential.

Educational service districts may offer programs leading to professional certification. PESB must encourage institutions of higher education and educational service districts to partner with school districts to provide instruction for teachers seeking professional certification. However, PESB may not require teachers to enroll in a professional certification program to become eligible for the professional certificate.

ProTeach Portfolio. Legislation adopted in 2007 required PESB to set performance standards and develop, pilot, and implement a uniform and externally administered professional-level certification assessment based on demonstrated teaching skill. The assessment, called the ProTeach Portfolio, was developed by a team of Washington educators facilitated by a nonprofit with expertise in assessment development, implementation, and administration.

The ProTeach Portfolio measures the three standards and 12 criteria for professional certification established by PESB. The portfolio consists of three entries: professional growth and contributions; building a learning community; and curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teachers must submit evidence for each entry, in the form of artifacts and student work samples, and must include written commentary to explain the interactions with the students by whom the student work was generated. A 2016 report from PESB states that about 83 percent of teachers pass the ProTeach.

Professional Certificate Renewal. There are a variety of options available for professional certificate renewal, depending on the type of certificate and when it was issued. Some teachers and administrators have the option, or are required, to create four annual Professional Growth Plans (PGPs) over a five-year period. PGPs are a plan that an educator intends to implement for growth over the coming year. Some teachers can use the PGP option, accumulate 150 continuing education clock hours in five years, or combine the options to renew the professional certificate. Teachers who earned a professional certificate by obtaining a National Board Certificate may renew the certificate by renewing the National Board Certificate.

Summary of Bill: Professional Teacher Certificate. PESB must provide teachers with three options to become professionally certified: (1) meet performance standards on the ProTeach Portfolio, (2) earn a National Board Certificate, or (3) earn 75 approved professional development credits, as described below.

By September 1, 2017, PESB must adopt rules that allow an applicant to qualify for the professional teacher certificate by earning 75 approved professional development credits within five years following the year that the teacher first completes provisional status.

Professional Development Credits and Activities. A professional development credit means a credit earned by attending 60 minutes of approved professional development activity. A professional development activity means a method by which a teacher may earn a professional development credit, where:

- the activity is related to pedagogy, the teacher's endorsement area or an endorsement area the teacher wishes to add, professional responsibilities, mentoring, or working with families and the community, or other options approved by PESB;
- the activity is not required by federal or state laws, or local school district policies, though the subject matter of the activity may be related to federal, state, or local requirements;
- the activity is not related to first aid or athletics;
- the teacher earns credit for attending, participating in, teaching, presenting, or preparing for the activity; and
- the teacher may be compensated for earning, but was not required to earn, the credit by the school district.

PESB must develop and implement a means to approve and track credits earned for approved professional development activities. PESB must also develop a process for approving providers of professional development activities.

Extension. PESB must provide a one-time, one-year extension to an applicant for the professional development credit option, who does not meet the above requirements, if the applicant earns 90 credits within six years following the year that the teacher first completes provisional status.

Fees. PESB must determine and adjust professional certification fees to defray the reasonable, necessary cost to PESB and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) of administering the professional teacher certification option described above.

Professional Administrator Certificate. By September 1, 2017, PESB must adopt rules for professional administrator certification that are substantially similar to the professional development credit option for professional teacher certification, described above.

Professional Certification Instruction. PESB must encourage institutions of higher education and educational service districts to partner with school districts to provide instruction for individuals seeking professional certification, rather than for teachers seeking professional certification.

Professional Certification Collaborative. The Professional Educator Collaborative (Collaborative) is established to review the integration of, and smooth the transitions between, educator certificates, and to make recommendations on how to improve and strengthen the pathways that lead to highly effective educators at each level of the public school system. The Collaborative is directed to look broadly at the issues surrounding educator recruitment, retention, professional learning, and evaluation for effectiveness, and must consider the incentives and supports that should be provided at each stage of an educator's career. The Collaborative must also review certification requirements that are not consistent with, or are duplicative of, evaluation requirements. In addition, the Collaborative must make recommendations on how to improve the reciprocity between Washington's educator certificates and the educator certificates of other states.

The members of the Collaborative must include representatives of the following organizations:

- the two largest caucuses of the Senate and the House of Representatives, appointed by the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively;
- PESB;
- OSPI;
- PESB-approved educator preparation programs;
- Washington State School Directors' Association;
- Washington Education Association;
- Washington Association of School Administrators;
- Association of Washington School Principals; and
- other educator associations.

Staff support for the Collaborative must be provided by PESB. The Collaborative must contract with a nonprofit, nonpartisan institute that conducts independent, high quality research to improve education policy and practice and that works with policymakers, researchers, educators, and others to advance evidence-based policies that support equitable learning for each child.

By November 1, 2019, the Collaborative must submit a preliminary report to the Legislature that describes the activities of the Collaborative to date, and includes any preliminary recommendations agreed to by the Collaborative. By November 1, 2020, the Collaborative must submit a final report to the Legislature that makes recommendations on how to improve and strengthen the pathways that lead to highly effective educators at each level of the public school system.

The section outlining the Collaborative expires August 31, 2021. The section establishing the Collaborative is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Other Provisions. A PESB rule allowing teachers with a National Board Certificate to qualify for a professional teacher certificate is placed into statute. Provisions describing the requirements for administering the ProTeach Portfolio and awarding a professional teacher certificate upon meeting standard on this assessment are consolidated. An expired reporting requirement is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: Yes.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Many teachers are concerned about the ProTeach system. It has created a disaster for teachers. The intent of this bill is to retain ProTeach but create a third pathway whereby teachers can become professionally certified. Teachers should not have to continually prove they are good teachers. The current system is duplicative, burdensome, and leading to a class of individuals that do not want to stay in the profession. The Collaborative created under this bill will help the state develop better alternatives to professional certification. Teachers resent the current system because of its high costs and low rewards. The ProTeach process is confusing for teachers. ProTeach does not accurately assess teachers. The Teacher Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) is a better process for assessing teachers in that it is free and more accurate. Requiring teachers to complete both ProTeach and TPEP is redundant. While a meaningful licensure process is critical to the success of students, the current process is costly, repetitive, onerous, and is not helpful to a teacher's practice. Educators do not believe that ProTeach provides an effective process for practice reflection, and instead feel that collaborative time with colleagues or tackling specific challenges in the classroom or building is a better approach. ProTeach does not align well with all classroom subjects. Teachers are concerned with the amount of time it takes to complete ProTeach. This bill helps reduce barriers to individuals coming into the profession and is a broad solution to addressing the teacher shortage. Changes to the system would prevent waiting until a teacher's ninth year of teaching to discover they should not be a teacher.

OTHER: The current system needs work. The ProTeach process takes administrators away from their work and forces them back into the classroom in order to gain a professional certification. ProTeach assignments are duplicative. Teachers and principals need relief and support alternative processes. TPEP is a better assessment program. There are some technical concerns with the bill. The intent of the 75 professional development hours is that they would be more robust than the current clock hour system. A better approach would be to give teachers whose certifications are about to expire an automatic extension and time to complete the ProTeach process, with knowledge that the system may change in the future. The bill should retain the Collaborative as the state looks at better aligning teacher

compensation, growth, and development. The policy created under this bill will have a long-term impact on education in the state.

CON: This bill does provide a means for regulating high quality professional development. The 75 clock hours is not enough to attain a higher level of professional licensure, as it is half of what is currently required for licensure renewal. Eliminating the second tier process altogether is a better option than reducing standards to a point to which educators are being awarded a certificate that suggests it is more than what it really is. Teachers have for decades risen to achieving the existing standards. This bill greatly reduces licensure standards. The bill creates problems with renewal. Washington is a state that is predicated on standards. The current second tier process is developmentally appropriate for teachers who are in their fifth, sixth, or seventh year of teaching. The ProTeach process gets at the core of what is needed to develop effective teachers. The cost is not overly expensive. Teachers have the option to seek out external supports to help them through the process. ProTeach positively impacts student learning. TPEP and ProTeach compliment each other and build greater coherence. The bill should first allow the Collaborative to make recommendations before changing the professional certification process. The Collaborative will allow the state to figure out where all the assessment pieces belong and make adjustments accordingly. The state could look at providing funding for ProTeach so that it is not a burden on teachers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Steve Bergquist, Prime Sponsor; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors' Association; Karl Johnson; Lauren House, Principal, Dishman Hills High School.

CON: Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; Luke Thomas, Chair, Professional Educator Standards Board; Jennifer Wallace, Executive Director, Professional Educator Standards Board.

OTHER: Sue Anderson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Robert Maxwell, Superintendent, Pullman School District.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.