

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5693

As of February 13, 2025

Title: An act relating to teacher residency and apprenticeship programs.

Brief Description: Concerning teacher residency and apprenticeship programs.

Sponsors: Senators Cortes, Conway and Nobles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/13/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Describes a teacher residency, establishes requirements for Teacher Residency Programs, and directs the Professional Educator Standards Board to establish a process for approving the transition of an existing Teacher Preparation Program to a Teacher Residency Program.
- Describes a Teacher Apprenticeship Program and establishes requirements for Teacher Apprenticeship Programs.
- Expands eligibility for the Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program to participants in Teacher Residency Programs.
- Renames educator certificates.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Elena Becker (786-7493)

Background: Educator Preparation Programs. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) adopts rules for the preparation and certification of educators. All Teacher Preparation Programs leading to a Washington teacher certificate must meet minimum state standards established by the PESB.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The traditional Teacher Preparation Program is offered by an institution of higher education and includes at least 450 hours of student teaching in a classroom setting. Prospective educators may also pursue Alternative Route Programs, partnerships between PESB-approved Teacher Preparation Programs, Washington school districts, and other partners that focus on teacher shortage areas. Alternative Route Programs must meet Teacher Preparation Program standards, include a one-year mentored internship, and incorporate 540 hours of student teaching.

The Washington Apprenticeship and Training Council establishes Apprenticeship Program standards as rules, including that apprenticeships must include 2000 hours of on-the-job training. Federal apprenticeship laws require a Teacher Apprenticeship Program be sponsored by an employer, labor union, industry association, educational institution, or workforce board.

Teacher Certifications. The Residency Teacher Certificate is Washington's initial teacher license. Applicants for this certificate must: possess a bachelor's degree or higher; complete an assessment in basic reading, writing, and mathematics; pass a content knowledge assessment; pass a fingerprint-based criminal history record check; and, for in-state applicants, complete a PESB-approved Teacher Preparation Program.

The Professional Teacher Certificate is an optional additional tier of licensing. Applicants for this certificate must meet one of the following requirements: two years of successful teaching experience as defined by PESB; National Board Certification; or five years of successful teaching plus an advanced level teacher certificate from another state or country deemed comparable to the Washington Professional Certificate.

Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship. The Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program, provides financial assistance to encourage persons to become teachers through Alternative Route Programs and to retain these teachers in shortage areas. An Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship is a loan that is forgiven, in whole or in part, in exchange for qualified service. The maximum award is \$8,000 per person, per year, for up to two years.

The Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship is forgiven when the recipient fulfills the following service obligation: serve as a certificated employee for two school years for each year of scholarship received, or serve as a certificated employee in a shortage area for one school year for each year of scholarship received.

Beginning Educator Support Team Program. The Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program provides professional development and mentor support to beginning educators. BEST mentors must have completed training in assisting, coaching, and advising beginning educators; been selected using standards developed by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and participate in ongoing mentor skills professional development.

Summary of Bill: Teacher Residency Program. A teacher residency is described as a teacher preparation model that integrates a full year of hands-on, mentored classroom teaching with concurrent, targeted academic coursework. Teacher residencies are offered by a public elementary or secondary school and a PESB-approved Teacher Preparation Program.

At a minimum, a Teacher Residency Program must:

- be operated as a formal partnership between a school district or state-tribal education compact school and a PESB-approved Teacher Preparation Program;
- contain coursework which must align with the unique context of each resident's classroom;
- assign each resident a preservice mentor, who must co-teach with the resident throughout the resident's 900 hours of preservice clinical experience over one school year;
- require undergraduate residents to complete 900 hours, and graduate residents 450 hours, of preservice clinical practice before assuming primary responsibility for student learning;
- require residents to be grouped into a cohort based on geography, specialty, or other relevant criteria; and
- provide funding to each resident and a stipend must be provided to each mentor.

The PESB must establish an approval process for a Teacher Preparation Program, in partnership with a school district, state-tribal compact school, or group of school districts or state-tribal compact schools, to become a new Teacher Preparation Program or transition some or all of an existing Teacher Preparation Program to a Teacher Residency Program.

Teacher Apprenticeship Program. A Teacher Apprenticeship Program is described as a program approved by both the Washington Apprenticeship and Training Council and PESB that is designed for individuals with bachelor's degrees who seek an initial teacher certificate and no graduate degree. In addition to meeting other requirements, the Teacher Apprenticeship Program must provide the apprentice with 2000 hours of on-the-job mentored teaching experience under a gradual release method.

Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship. Eligibility for the Alternative Route Conditional Scholarship Program is expanded to include students in Teacher Residency Programs.

Teacher Certificate Name Changes. Effective July 1, 2026, PESB is directed to prepare for the following educator certificate name changes: the "residency certificate" will be renamed the "initial certificate," and the "professional certificate" will be renamed the "continuing certificate."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 7, 2025.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: It's well known that we have an ongoing teacher shortage, especially in high demand fields like special education. We need as many options as possible to recruit additional teachers, whether brand new teachers or career changers. This bill creates a strong, uniform framework for transitioning Teacher Preparation Programs to residency models. Investing in our teachers is an investment in the future of our state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Adrian Cortes, Prime Sponsor.

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