

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6217

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to demonstrating basic skills for entrance into a teacher preparation program.

Brief Description: Changing requirements for admission to teacher preparation programs.

Sponsors: Senators Johnson and McAuliffe; by request of Board of Education.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/15/96, 2/20/96 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chairman; Elliot, Vice Chairman; Johnson, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clements; Fuhrman; Hatfield; Linville; McMahan; Pelesky; Poulsen; Quall; Radcliff; Smith; Talcott; B. Thomas; Thompson and Veloria.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: Under current law, an individual may not be admitted into a teacher preparation program without first demonstrating that he or she is competent in the basic skills. A person must earn a combined score on tests of general achievement equal to the statewide median.

A person does not have to take the general skills test if the person

- has a BA or graduate degree; or
- is over 21 and has completed two or more years of college-level course work and can demonstrate competency through college-level course work and a written essay.

Summary of Amended Bill: Current law is modified regarding how the applicant must demonstrate competency in the basic skills. All applicants regardless of age may demonstrate competency through completion of two or more years of college-level course work and a written essay. Also, applicants may demonstrate competency through an examination specifically designed to assess basic skills required for oral and written communication and computation. As in current law, competency may be demonstrated through a baccalaureate or graduate degree.

Competency in reading is added to the list of basic skills that must be demonstrated by applicants prior to admission.

The state Board of Education is directed to make recommendations by January 1997 as to whether a single uniform test of basic skills should be required for admission to teacher preparation programs and as a requirement for out-of-state teachers applying for certification in Washington.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Reading was added to the list of basic skill areas that must be demonstrated. A provision was added directing the state board to provide recommendations regarding the development of a uniform basic skills test.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Whether an individual is older than 21 should not be a factor in deciding how to measure competency in basic skills. The state board is addressing basic skills competency in all phases of teacher preparation and certification.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Larry Davis, state Board of Education.