

Education

HB 1171

Brief Description: Providing tuition assistance for public school teachers required to take college courses to continue teaching and classified instructional staff seeking teacher certification.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Barlean, DeBolt, Edmonds, Quall, Kagi, Edwards, Rockefeller, Keiser, Murray, Lovick, Miloscia, Ogden, Conway, Van Luven, Haigh, Simpson, Campbell, Ruderman, Linville, Schual-Berke, D. Schmidt, Wood and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Providing tuition assistance to public school teachers required to take college courses to continue teaching and public school classified instructional staff seeking teacher certification.*

Hearing Date: 2/1/01

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

Washington provides two levels of certification for teachers. The first level of certification is provided to new teachers. These teachers must complete a college or university program that has been approved by the State Board of Education. The second level is advanced certification provided to teachers who have taught for two or more years and have completed additional requirements determined by the State Board of Education. In order to maintain the advanced certification, most teachers must complete 150 clock hours of study, or their equivalent in academic credit, every five years.

During the 2000-2001 academic year, tuition and fee rates for state colleges and

universities may vary by institution. If each institution used its entire tuition setting authority, credit hour rates for undergraduate courses would range from a low of about \$55 per credit in the community colleges to a high of about \$122 per credit at the two research universities. Tuition and fee rates for graduate level courses would vary from about \$152 per credit at the comprehensive institutions to more than \$270 per credit at the two research universities. Courses offered during the summer are not state supported, so tuition rates for those courses may vary more dramatically.

The state's salary schedule recognizes in 15 credit increments the additional educational credits earned by certificated instructional staff. Annual salary increases for additional blocks of credit range from 2.6 percent to 8.3 percent.

Summary of Bill:

Under certain conditions, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will reimburse public school teachers and classified instructional staff for the costs of courses taken at regionally accredited colleges and universities.

Teachers may receive reimbursement for courses taken to meet the state's continuing certification requirements. Classified instructional staff may receive reimbursement for courses taken to obtain a teaching certificate. OSPI may reimburse each applicant for graded courses in which the applicant has received a grade of B- or better and for passed courses if the course is assessed on a pass-fail basis. Applicants will receive the cost of the course, up to a maximum of the average tuition rates at the state's public baccalaureate institutions. When a classified instructional staff person who receives tuition reimbursement completes a teaching certificate, the office may seek to recover the reimbursed amounts if the staff does not teach in the public schools for at least two years within the ensuing five year period.

The office's administrative responsibilities and the documentation that each applicant must provide are described.

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

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on January 22, 2001.*