

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2930

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 24, 2010

Title: An act relating to expanding the pool of qualified teachers.

Brief Description: Expanding the pool of qualified teachers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Wallace, Sells, Carlyle, Anderson and Haler).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/10, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/19/10, 2/24/10 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Kilmer, Chair; Kastama, Vice Chair; Becker, Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Shin, Stevens and Tom.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: In 2004 the Legislature modified an existing, but inactive, conditional-scholarship program so that it could be a vehicle for targeting teacher-shortage areas. The Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program (Future Teachers) was established. It was designed to encourage outstanding students and paraprofessionals to become teachers and to encourage current teachers to obtain additional endorsements in teacher-shortage subjects. Participants agree to teach in Washington K-12 public schools in return for conditional scholarships or loan repayments. Each year the Legislature can designate subjects to receive selection priority if the applicants commit to teaching those subjects. Math, science, and special education are often among the priority designated subjects. Participants can receive conditional scholarships or loan repayments for up to five years. Award amounts cannot exceed tuition and fees at the participant's college or university, or full-time resident undergraduate tuition and fees at the University of Washington – whichever is lower.

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

The Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification Conditional Loan Scholarship Program (Alt Route) was created to help school districts recruit teachers in subjects and geographic areas with teacher shortages. Funding is provided for students enrolled in alternative routes to teacher-certification programs, approved by the Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB). The programs are aimed at experienced paraeducators and midcareer professionals with expertise in subject areas in which Washington has shortages. Students receiving funding through the Alt Route agree to teach in specified subject-shortage areas in Washington K-12 schools, in return for conditional-loan scholarships. The PESB determines the shortage areas, selects the recipients, and administers the Alt Route. The HECB serves as the fiscal agent for the Alt Route.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): The HECB is directed to give priority in selecting Future Teachers scholarship recipients to those individuals who are seeking specialty endorsements in math approved by the PESB, as well as individuals who are uniquely qualified to help schools address the achievement gap. Eligibility for the program is reduced from five years to two years. Beginning with the 2013-14 academic year, the HECB may provide students with both conditional scholarships and loan repayment benefits up to the total cost of attendance or \$15,000, whichever is lower. In providing the loan repayment benefit, the HECB is required to pay up to \$3,000 of supplemental payments per year on federal student loans over a period of ten years or until the total loan repayment award has been satisfied. Conditional scholarships and loan repayments may be awarded in conjunction with other financial assistance, including the Alt Route. The scholarships may also be used for any educational or personal expenses.

The PESB is directed to give priority in selecting Alt Route scholarship recipients to those individuals who are seeking specialty endorsements in math approved by the PESB as well as individuals who are uniquely qualified to help schools address the achievement gap. Beginning in the 2013-14 academic year, a federal student loan repayment component is added to the existing conditional-scholarship program. The HECB may provide federal student loan repayment of up to the total cost of attendance at the institution attended by the participant or \$15,000 whichever is lower. In providing the loan repayment benefit, the HECB must pay up to \$3,000 per year for supplemental federal student loans payments over a period of ten years or until the total loan repayment award has been satisfied. The HECB must begin loan repayment for the Alternate Route program upon documentation of federal student loan indebtedness and completion of the first year of teaching service.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): It is clarified that the HECB is not required to award loan repayments to all program participants. The HECB must begin loan repayment for the Alternate Route program upon documentation of federal student loan indebtedness and completion of the first year of teaching service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute House Bill : PRO: We need to address the achievement gap as well as produce more mathematics teachers. The point of the bill is to streamline programs that are already in place so that we can address critical state needs and stretch our investment dollars. The two-year timeframe focuses the money on professionals that are ready to take advantage of the opportunity. This will help talented and motivated professionals return to school so that they can help us boost the educational achievement of Washington citizens.

OTHER: We need to answer the question of whether we want more scholarships or richer scholarships.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Wallace, prime sponsor; Arlee Young, TESC; Erin Jones, OSPI; John Klacik, HECB.

OTHER: David Brenna, PESB.