

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1600

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to elementary math specialists.

Brief Description: Concerning elementary math specialists.

Sponsors: Representatives Probst, Anderson, Maxwell and Roberts.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/11/11, 2/15/11, 2/17/11 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Encourages the Professional Educator Standards Board to develop and adopt standards for a specialty endorsement for elementary mathematics.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Angel, Billig, Dahlquist, Fagan, Finn, Haigh, Hargrove, Hunt, Klippert, Ladenburg, Lias, Maxwell, McCoy, Probst and Wilcox.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz.

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

Professional Educator Standards Board.

The purpose of the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is to establish policies and requirements for the preparation and certification of education professionals, ensuring that they:

- are competent in the professional knowledge and practice for which they are certified;

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- have a foundation of skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to help students with diverse needs, abilities, cultural experiences, and learning styles that meet or exceed the state learning goals; and
- are committed to research-based practice and career-long professional development.

The PESB also serves as an advisory body to the Superintendent of Public Instruction on issues related to educator recruitment, hiring, mentoring and support, professional growth, retention, evaluation, and revocation and suspension of licensure.

Teaching Endorsements.

A teacher must have an endorsement to his or her teaching certificate to teach a particular subject. At the secondary level, endorsements are based on specific academic subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, English, etc.). A teacher with an elementary education endorsement can teach any academic subject to students in grades kindergarten through 8.

The PESB has created a procedure for adding specialty endorsements that are not required for the teacher to teach that subject. To date, there are five specialty endorsements: (1) deaf education; (2) environmental and sustainability education; (3) teacher of the visually impaired; (4) orientation and mobility teacher; and (5) gifted education.

A number of states, including Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, and Arizona, have created some form of endorsement in teaching elementary mathematics. In some cases the state requires this endorsement for teaching certain grade levels; in other cases the endorsement is an optional supplement.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The PESB is encouraged to develop standards and adopt a specialty endorsement for an Elementary Mathematics Specialist (Specialist). A Specialist is a certificated teacher who has demonstrated the following knowledge and skills:

- enhanced mathematics content knowledge and skills necessary to provide students, in grades kindergarten through 8, with a deep understanding of the essential academic learning requirements and performance expectations in mathematics;
- knowledge and skills in a variety of instructional strategies for teaching mathematics content; and
- knowledge and skills in instructional strategies targeted for students struggling in mathematics.

School districts are encouraged to use Specialists for direct instruction of students using an itinerant teacher model where the Specialist moves from classroom to classroom within the school.

School districts may work with local colleges and universities, educator preparation programs, and educational service districts to develop and offer training and professional development opportunities in the knowledge and skills necessary for a teacher to be considered a Specialist.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill encourages, but no longer requires, the PESB to adopt a specialty endorsement for Specialists.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 17, 2011.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There is a lot of evidence that the state's and the nation's position in the world with respect to education has eroded. Many people attribute this to a lack of mathematics. It is known that most students are turned off by mathematics beginning in the fourth grade. In light of this, it is obvious that the problem must be solved before the fourth grade. Having a separate cadre of elementary mathematics experts will help districts, students, the state, and the nation to go back to having a world class education system. There are different kinds of math specialists. Some are itinerant and assist other teachers who teach math, some teach only math to students, and others teach math as well as other subjects. The goal is to have great math teachers. Much time has been spent over the last year trying to convince the PESB of creating this specialty endorsement, but the PESB has remained opposed.

Hopefully, the PESB will come around. Now is the right time to do this. The competencies for a Specialist should be determined now so when the economy comes back around, there are Specialists that are poised to help districts put in the math supports that they need. Many states have done this. The cost is very little. The best ideas come from constituents and that is where this idea came from. It is from a constituent who was born in India and moved here, worked at Intel, and now is in retirement, and is giving back to this country.

(Opposed) There is a role for Specialists. Under House Bill 2261, direction was given to study educator compensation as a whole, and how the pieces fit together. This work should be completed before creating more Specialists. There is a concern with the precedent that will be set by having lots of different Specialists.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Probst, prime sponsor; Ramona Hattendorf, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Greta Bornemann, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Sudhakar Kudva; and Dick Padrick.

(Opposed) Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.