October 26, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

I’m writing today as President of the Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to ask that you approve, as agency-request legislation, the proposal from the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to update how we recommend our graduates for professional teacher certification.

In 2010, during the push for standardized testing across educational institutions, the legislature charged the PESB (in E2SSB 6696) with requiring an “evidence-based assessment of teaching effectiveness.” And while, over the ensuing dozen years, the test has been developed and refined, it still sometimes fails to consistently identify all of the attributes and characteristics of effective educational practitioners.

The PESB request legislation was an idea initiated over a year ago, well before the current issues of the pandemic. However, given the current realities of the pandemic, this issue is all the more urgent and we agree with PESB that this is an idea worth making permanent. This legislative proposal would provide program flexibility as we identify successful candidates, who, by evaluating all multiple measures will make excellent future classroom teachers. It will allow the PESB and preparation programs to look holistically at all candidates and get them into Washington classrooms, even though they fall slightly below the cut score for the assessment. Sometimes the problem is for candidates who are English Language Learners, so we anticipate the flexibility of this legislative change will help to continue our mission to diversify the teaching corps in Washington, which is a stated mission and goal of WACTE and PESB. The board would use this deeper look for candidates within one standard deviation of the cutoff score, so it would also account for problems with rater reliability and consistency.

I know your father was a teacher, so I’m sure you understand that teaching is both an art and a science. This legislation will, ultimately, allow our preparation programs to identify those with the right mix of the art and the science, and get the right mix of educators into our schools, particularly as we seek to diversify the educator workforce.

Please support the PESB’s request legislation for this upcoming legislative session.

Sincerely,



Keith Lambert, President

Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

cc: Maddy Thompson