

As of July – in time for fall enrollments – the WEST-B test will no longer be a brick wall keeping some candidates out of teacher preparation programs. The Governor will sign SHB 1621 this afternoon (April 23rd) removing the requirement to pass the test. Candidates will still have to take the test, but it will become one piece of evidence for you to consider for admission.

The huge, so-called “teacher shortage” bill – E2SHB 1139 – **awaits House concurrence in the Senate’s amendments.** The bill:

- Creates new teacher recruitment and retention programs in various areas, including regional educator recruitment, recruitment of military personnel, and alternative routes to certification.
- Modifies provisions to existing programs, including Recruiting Washington Teachers, field placement in teacher preparation programs, and teacher postretirement retire/rehire rules.
- **Revises grant and scholarship programs, including grants for student teachers, educator conditional scholarship and loan repayment programs, the Teacher Shortage Conditional Scholarship, the Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship, beginning educator support, and the TEACH grants for testing costs for candidates.**
- Modifies teacher evaluation standards, including requiring that comprehensive evaluations be performed every six years instead of four.
- **Creates work groups to address various issues of teacher recruitment and retention, including the Professional Educator Collaborative. WACTE is named in the bill as a mandatory member of the Collaborative.**
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Professional Educator Standards Board to report to the Legislature regarding the effect of disciplinary action on the recruitment of educators.

Regarding the revamp of grant and scholarship programs – they are all consolidated at the Student Achievement Council. WSAC must consult with PESB on adopting rules for the grants and scholarships, but WSAC seems to retain final say under the legislation. (The scholarships and grants all go into RCW 28B – the higher ed statutes – instead of the K-12 laws under RCW 28A where most now reside.)

As a part of the legislation, the Pipeline for Paraeducators’ conditional scholarship no longer requires a promise to complete a teaching degree at an alternative route – the candidate will be free to complete their education at any preparation program.

2SSB 5082 makes permanent the committee on social emotional learning (Debbie Tully is a member representing WACTE). And PESB has to institute the committee’s as standards along the learning continuum in both K-12 classrooms and in preparation programs. **(The bill is currently in dispute over some amendments that were originally thought to make it less expensive, but apparently added several hundred thousands of dollars in cost.)**

And a final note: Alex Ybara – a member of the social emotional work group and a member of the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee -- is the new member of the House from the 13th district, appointed to replace former Rep. Matt Manweller, who resigned after his firing for sexual misconduct as a professor at CWU. The former rocket scientist who works as an auditor at the Grant County PUD, Ybarra was the prime sponsor of the bill eliminating the requirement to pass the WEST-B.