

# Request for Expanded Alternative Route for Teachers Funding PA

**Agency:** 350 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction/Professional Educator Standards Board  
**Budget Period:** 2015-17

## **Recommendation Summary Text:**

PESB is requesting increases in the Alternative Route program and the Educator Retooling program to fund additional teacher production given the current teacher shortage crisis. The 2015 Legislature restored funding to this PESB program, which experienced severe reductions in funding starting in 2011, and suspension of the program entirely in the last biennium. For more information on the programs, see our website <http://pathway.pesb.wa.gov/educator-preparation-providers/alternate-route-block-grants>.

The benefit of Alternative Route and Retooling programs is that districts can place teachers in classrooms immediately, while they earn credentials: essentially “on the job” training. They are also recruiting from their experienced paraeducator ranks. The number of district / preparation program partnerships applying for funds to operate Alternative Routes will well exceed the current biennial appropriation. Increased legislative funding will be needed to meet level of demand and help address the current teacher shortage. Legislation that addresses the flexibility of the program will be requested again this session. Retooling provides another vehicle for currently certified teachers to add endorsements and for districts to address issues of assignment and teacher shortage with additional resources to support developing their teacher workforce. Finally, Federal Title I and II funds will be leveraged at the district level to further support these efforts. In particular, the OSPI Title II office recently released an Equity Plan that contains recommendations to districts on supporting teacher development, an important answer to low retention rates in some districts. Many of the strategies in the Plan align with PESB work on preparation, recruitment and retention of educators.

## **Fiscal Detail**

<b>Operating Expenditures</b>		<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>Total</b>
General Fund	001-1	\$0	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$3,600,000</b>	<b>\$3,600,000</b>

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>Annual Avg.</b>
<b>Total FTEs Requested</b>			

## **Package Description**

### **Background**

Washington’s teacher labor market froze during the economic downturn. This means that teachers who normally would have left teaching, stayed. We had fewer teachers leaving the system, and fewer teachers moving between districts or schools. Clearly this has changed. Currently, Washington teachers are leaving at a rate that we have not seen for at least the past

## **Request for Expanded Alternative Route for Teachers Funding PA**

decade. [ <http://data.pesb.wa.gov/retention>]. Not only are veteran teachers leaving at unprecedented rates, they are transferring as well.

Additionally, teacher preparation program enrollment is less than it has been in a decade. During the recession, many teachers were not offered positions their first year in the market, exacerbating the slow reduction in enrollment. Now most graduates are immediately employed. Still districts report not enough new teachers to fill vacancies. With additional funding for Alternative Routes, and the Retooling program to improve credentials for existing teachers, PESB anticipates adding 400 to 600 new teachers to the workforce, and retooling 300 existing teachers with credentials that fill district demand.

### **Current Situation**

Six years ago PESB was fielding calls from teacher programs in a panic, noting that even their most qualified completers were not finding jobs. When the hiring results came that year it was clear what had happened, the teaching profession had frozen, teachers who would typically move positions or leave teaching were staying put. Districts, which just two years prior had hired 6,500 teachers to fill new and transferring teaching positions, had hired for only 2,500 positions, 1,800 of those going to teachers who were new to the system. What did these unemployed program completers do? Some stayed in temporary employment waiting for teaching positions to open up, some entered the substitute pools, and others pursued careers outside of public education. There were probably many reasons teachers stopped leaving the profession that year, not the least of which was the economic crises, which dramatically reduced opportunities in the private sector.

Last year PESB was fielding the opposite calls, as districts were frantically looking for teachers to fill their newly vacated positions. Sure enough, when the hiring data came in, we saw the opposite effect, districts had hired for 7,300 vacancies, more than we've ever seen. Of those positions, 4,700 were new to Washington's public schools. In five years we had seen a 250% increase in demand for new teachers. Districts hired candidates that had graduated from earlier years but were still waiting for positions, including many of those that were serving in substitute pools. As the year went on it became apparent that the number of substitutes had dwindled, substitutes had taken new positions, both in and out of the public school workforce.

This year PESB is fielding new questions, where programs and districts are inquiring about the legality of hiring teacher candidates who are still in programs. The hiring data is not in yet, but this suggests that districts have hired all available teachers, including substitute and conditional credentialed teachers, and many are now looking in new areas, including students currently enrolled in teacher education programs.

The main driver for this boom and bust is the number of teachers leaving the profession. We don't know if the current teacher hiring boom is a correction from the earlier bust years—where teachers that would have typically left stayed on until the economy came back—or if it is the new normal—where the booming economy continues to give teachers new and better opportunities outside of public education.

There are other issues impacting the teacher shortage in Washington. Teacher program enrollment and completions in some of our larger programs are down, reflecting a national

## **Request for Expanded Alternative Route for Teachers Funding PA**

trend. There are many theories for this—from teacher pay to changes in parent perception of teaching as a profession—but there are no easy answers. We have no evidence our teacher education programs reduced the number of slots available, but rather they are reflecting the market demand. Higher education enrollment continues to increase, and programs in STEM fields are finding themselves turning away qualified students, while programs in education are laying off staff and cutting courses. Also, beginning teacher attrition clearly impacts the teacher shortage, and continues to be a concern both nationally and in Washington. However, this issue has persisted for many years, and is not the root cause for Washington’s current crises. Finally there are issues related to credentialing. It is clear that obtaining and keeping a teacher credential in Washington does preclude some from becoming a teacher, which to some extent is the intent of a licensed profession. Some do not have adequate subject matter knowledge or lack basic writing skills. Undoubtedly, lowering standards would allow a few more people to teach in Washington’s public schools, but it is important to note that the number of people who fail these assessments are comparatively few and that lowering standards will have little or no impact on the magnitude of the problem, which is teachers leaving the profession at a rate never before seen in Washington.

Teacher shortages are common in Washington, but usually they are localized and specific to certain content areas. There are practices and policies in place to deal with these shortages, such as hiring long-term substitutes or hiring on conditional or emergency credentials. There are federal policies related to No Child Left Behind that serve as a disincentive for these practices, but there is nothing in Washington policy that precludes districts from hiring someone on a limited credential.

The combination of leavers and transfers mean that district hiring has gone up dramatically. Where several years ago we had high unemployment of graduates looking to become teachers, it now appears that nearly all graduates looking for teaching jobs are finding positions. Graduates unable to find teaching positions contributed to district substitute pools. Increased hiring means these substitute pools are also diminished.

### **Proposed Solution**

This decision package is one of two that will be submitted to address the teacher shortage challenge. OSPI and PESB have collaborated closely and each agency will submit decision packages that in combination, address what each agency can do to improve current short term conditions and build systemic change into the educator workforce for sustainable change.

PESB is seeking \$3.6M additional funds in the upcoming supplemental budget. Additionally, PESB believes that Title I and Title II funds can be leveraged at the district level to provide the additional support needed to assure that an influx of new teachers can perform at a suitable level. Funds from GF-S, an additional \$3M, will be distributed to Alternative Route scholarships and district supports and \$600K to Retooling scholarships.

The Alternative Routes budget is transferred to Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). WSAC operates a program account, Future Teachers (RCW 28B.102.080), that awards grants based on a promissory note requiring two years of teaching service for each year of scholarship support. Scholarships are dispersed to teachers applying for up to \$8,000 to pay tuition and expenses in order to earn a teaching endorsement. Additional funds, up to \$7,000 per candidate, are attached to each Alternative Route participant and support the district and

## **Request for Expanded Alternative Route for Teachers Funding PA**

the preparation program with mentoring and other teacher supports. This assures that the new candidate will be able to handle classroom duties while achieving a credential.

Retooling grants of up to \$3,000 are also included in the budget transfer to WSAC. The grant funds will be dispersed to teachers applying for scholarships to pay tuition and expenses in order to earn a second endorsement. Educator Retooling is also conditioned on two years of teaching service in the subject matter area of the added endorsement. The 2015 Legislature created flexibility for the Retooling program, permitting districts to determine shortage areas that could benefit from retooling existing teachers.

Additionally, OSPI is submitting requests for marketing efforts, a clearing house for employment opportunity and submission of applications, technical assistance through ESD's, and other supports to address this crisis.

PESB believes this multi-strategy approach offers both a short-term and long term solution to teacher shortages. PESB is launching a training effort that will provide districts Human Resource managers strategies for recruitment, onboarding and retention of new teachers. Alternative routes and other strategies from OSPI such as marketing, can alleviate the current crisis, longer term efforts will address long term issues in workforce development. PESB has sought policy improvements in the past that address allocation approaches and forecasting of enrollment. Workforce development is a challenge for districts, but the policy improvements and expansions considered currently offer potential to strengthen the state's position.

### **Contact person**

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### **Narrative Justification and Impact Statement**

#### **What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?**

With support from districts and preparation programs, PESB projects that 400 to 600 new teachers can be added to the workforce through this biennium. With regular teacher production lagging to about 1,200 annually, this additional production of teachers who can enter the classroom quickly will mean that most of the shortage can be addressed. In addition, PESB in partnership with ESD's and districts is working to address the systemic challenges that lead to a shortage crisis, and alleviate future crises.

New preparation programs are also expected to come online at the community college level, with three programs (Grays Harbor, Centralia and Peirce) presenting application to the PESB in November, 2015. Over the next few years, that additional capacity could add another 300 teachers to the workforce. Finally, working with OSPI on the Careers in Education program and the new curriculum based on Recruiting Washington Teachers, a high school program for students interested in teaching, expanded potential for new teachers is created, particularly from underrepresented populations.

#### **Performance Measure Detail**

Performance measures are program completers and new hires by program and district. Assumptions: average \$13,000- 15,000 per candidate successfully completing program and becoming certified teachers equals 230 in addition to the expected 150 from existing alternative routes funding. Expansion of alternative routes program does not require scholarships: candidate may pay tuition for the program.

## **Request for Expanded Alternative Route for Teachers Funding PA**

### **Is this decision package essential to implement a strategy identified in the agency's strategic plan?**

PESB has as its primary strategic goal the support of the teacher, and other educator, workforce.

**Reason for change:** N/A

### **Does this decision package provide essential support to one of the Governor's priorities?**

Education is a high priority for the Governor and this current crisis should be addressed as soon and as effectively as possible.

### **Does this decision package provide essential support to one or more of the Governor's Results Washington priorities? If so, describe. N/A**

### **What are the other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?**

PESB, during its September 18, 2015 meeting, heard public comment from a delegation that included Superintendents from Educational Service Districts and Deans of Colleges of Education. All expressed clear concerns about the current teacher shortage and asked that PESB provide leadership to a task force effort. PESB has also engaged the Washington Association of School Administrators, the Association of Washington School Principals, the Washington Association of School Budget Officials and Washington Association State School Directors in planning for the Human Resources training effort and continue to communicate with all parties, including individual districts and teachers.

### **Impact on Other State Programs**

#### **What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?**

As part of the coalition of concerned organizations addressing teacher shortages, PESB has been advancing strategies and policy initiative since 2010. PESB has closely studied and analyzed the data on teacher workforce and made proposals to the Legislature for addressing what we believed was a coming challenge. As described above, that challenge is upon us. Since PESB is currently ramping up its Alternative Route program, we believe that it specifically answers the short and long term issues presented by the economic conditions and teacher retention issues.

#### **What are the consequences of adopting or not adopting this package?**

Districts are already experiencing difficulty in placing teachers in the classroom, many of them relying on placing other educators, with active teacher credentials, in the classroom while continuing recruitment efforts. An advantage of the Alternative Routes program is that teacher candidates can hold conditional certificates and be in the classroom while completing credentialing. Not expanding the current program funding means that districts will have to continue to cobble together unsustainable solutions.

#### **What is the relationship, if any, to the state's capital budget?**

N/A

#### **What changes would be required to existing statutes, rules, or contracts, in order to implement the change?**

## Request for Expanded Alternative Route for Teachers Funding PA

PESB intends to advance Legislation sponsored in the 2015 session on alternative route policy, proving additional flexibility to the program. Additionally, PESB will encourage policy examination of state level forecast support to districts, and examining the need to change allocation policies to reduce risk to districts in projecting the demand for teachers and hiring on time. Late hires contribute to low retention rates.

PESB has been conducting the Paraeducator Work Group over the past two years where discussions both in the workgroup and subcommittees have consisted of developing a strong career ladder for paras. Recommendations from the work group have included the expansion of alternate route programs to support paras becoming teachers. The average age of para educators is 52, with the average age of teachers being a similar age. We need more effective strategies to move potential candidates in the para ranks and those on limited certificates to become certified teachers.

As we see more community colleges move forward to become teacher preparation programs as requested by the legislature, all of them are selecting the alternate route program design to meet the needs of their students to become teachers through a BAS program and their final two years as an alternate route program. Dollars for alternate routes will additionally provide support for these programs to support students. Community college student enrollment is significantly more diverse than our current four year teacher preparation programs.

**Revenue Calculations and Assumptions: N/A**

**Expenditure Calculations and Assumptions:**

The \$3,000,000 annual scholarship amount at \$13,000-\$15,000 per teacher candidate could produce 200-230 new teachers in the second year of the biennium. The \$600,000 dedicated to retooling existing teachers to fill district demand for certain qualifications could produce 200 new credentials in the second year of the biennium.

**Object Detail**

		FY 2016	FY 2017	Total
A	Salary and Wages	\$0	\$0	\$0
B	Employee Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0
C	Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$0
E	Goods/Services	\$0	\$0	\$0
G	Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0
J	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0
N	Grants	\$0	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000
	Interagency Reimbursement	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Objects</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$3,600,000</b>	<b>\$3,600,000</b>

# Request for Expanded Alternative Route for Teachers Funding PA

## Expenditures & FTEs by Program

Activity Inventory Item	Prog	Staffing			Operating Expenditures		
		FY 2016	FY 2017	Avg	FY 2016	FY 2017	Total
A021- Professional Educator Standards Board	010				\$0	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000
					\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Activities</b>					<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$3,600,000</b>	<b>\$3,600,000</b>

## Six-Year Expenditure Estimates

Fund	15-17 Total	17-19 Total	19-21 Total
General Fund 001-1	<b>\$3,600,000</b>	<b>\$7,200,000</b>	<b>\$7,200,000</b>
<b>Expenditure Total</b>	<b>\$3,600,000</b>	<b>\$7,200,000</b>	<b>\$7,200,000</b>
<b>FTEs</b>			

**Which costs and functions are one-time? Which are ongoing? What are the budget impacts in future biennia?**

PESB would assume the next biennium allocations for Alternative Routes would be determined during budget discussion prior to the Governors 2017-19 biennial request. If the teacher shortage has been effectively addressed, the role of Alternative Routes can be analyzed in developing longer term solutions for the workforce.