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**SENATE BILL 5415**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators McAuliffe, Mullet, Chase, Rolfes, McCoy, Billig, Liias, Fraser, Cleveland, Keiser, and Conway

AN ACT Relating to professional educator learning days; amending RCW 28A.150.200; adding a new section to chapter 28A.150 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature recognizes that research shows that an inspiring and informed educator and strong school-based principal leadership are important school-related factors influencing student achievement. The legislature further recognizes that the ongoing educational reform efforts enacted by the legislature, including the teacher and principal evaluation efforts, the common core state standards for instruction and assessment, school-level reform approaches, and other reform programs and activities, present new challenges for principals and educators.

(2) The legislature finds that because research shows that high-quality educators are so important for student success, that ongoing training and professional development is essential to support educators and increase student learning. The legislature further finds that part of the plan for meeting the constitutional obligations to fully fund a program of basic education must therefore include increased professional development and training in order to give educators and principals the tools they need to be successful with the new reforms already established. The legislature further finds that the Washington state institute for public policy reported that content-specific professional development is much more effective than general training. The legislature also finds that providing a clear topic for professional development each biennium will better align and support educators across the state's school districts and schools and will ensure state resources are used in a manner that is proven to positively impact student learning.

(3) Therefore, the legislature intends to provide additional time and resources for content-specific professional learning days for each state-funded certificated instructional staff and school building-based administrator to increase his or her knowledge and skills in the areas of current and future educational reforms. The legislature further intends to phase-in time and resources for state-funded classified employees who are engaged in student instruction.

(4) The goal of the legislature is to provide a sufficient number of professional learning days necessary to meet the needs in Washington's schools and to designate the professional learning days to be part of basic education.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.150.200 and 2009 c 548 s 101 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The program of basic education established under this chapter is deemed by the legislature to comply with the requirements of Article IX, section 1 of the state Constitution, which states that "It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex," and is adopted pursuant to Article IX, section 2 of the state Constitution, which states that "The legislature shall provide for a general and uniform system of public schools."

(2) The legislature defines the program of basic education under this chapter as that which is necessary to provide the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the state-established high school graduation requirements that are intended to allow students to have the opportunity to graduate with a meaningful diploma that prepares them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship. Basic education by necessity is an evolving program of instruction intended to reflect the changing educational opportunities that are needed to equip students for their role as productive citizens and includes the following:

(a) The instructional program of basic education the minimum components of which are described in RCW 28A.150.220;

(b) The program of education provided by chapter 28A.190 RCW for students in residential schools as defined by RCW 28A.190.020 and for juveniles in detention facilities as identified by RCW 28A.190.010;

(c) The program of education provided by chapter 28A.193 RCW for individuals under the age of eighteen who are incarcerated in adult correctional facilities; ((~~and~~))

(d) Transportation and transportation services to and from school for eligible students as provided under RCW 28A.160.150 through 28A.160.180; and

(e) Professional learning days as provided under section 3 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.150 RCW to read as follows:

(1)(a) Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, the legislature shall annually provide additional time and resources for high-quality, content-specific, professional learning days for each state-funded certificated instructional staff and school building-based administrator to increase knowledge and skills in the areas of current and future educational reforms. The minimum funding for a professional learning day must be equivalent to the aggregate amount provided for the state-funded salaries for each certificated instructional staff and school-based administrator in the school district for one full school day. School districts must be required to expend the funds on professional learning activities but the learning is not required to be accomplished in one full school day and it may be organized in whatever time blocks the district chooses so long as the total time equates to one full school day. The learning improvement day must take place outside of the minimum one hundred eighty-day school calendar.

(b) For the 2015-16 school year, the funds provided for a professional learning day must be used for professional development on the teacher and principal evaluation program under RCW 28A.405.100. School districts may select the topic for the professional learning day for certificated instructional staff who are not subject to evaluation under RCW 28A.405.100.

(c) For the 2016-17 school year, the funds provided under this section shall be used for professional development on the best practices for instruction of the common core state standards. School districts may select the topic for the professional learning day for certificated instructional staff who do not provide instruction in the content areas or grade levels addressed by the common core state standards.

(d) After the 2016-17 school year:

(i) The topics for the professional learning days funded under this section must be specified in the omnibus appropriations act; and

(ii) The legislature will begin phasing-in a professional learning day for state-funded classified employees who are engaged in student instruction.

(A) The initial funds provided under this subsection (1)(d)(ii) shall be used for professional development on best practices for classified employees engaged with students with disabilities who receive special education and students who are English language learners.

(B) The professional development topics in subsequent years must be specified in the omnibus appropriations act.

(2) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules to implement this section.

(3) The funding provided under this section shall be deemed to be part of the legislature's definition of basic education under Article IX of the state Constitution.

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