
HOUSE BILL 2066

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By Representatives Keiser, Talcott, Quall, Anderson, Haigh, Romero, Ericksen, D. Schmidt, Conway, Pearson, Schindler, Cox, Edmonds, Santos and Kenney

Read first time 02/13/2001. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to educator preparation and mentoring; amending RCW
2 28A.415.250; adding a new section to chapter 28A.410 RCW; and creating
3 new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that good teachers are
6 the cornerstone of the state's education system and that preparing
7 future teachers is critical to the well-being of the state. The
8 legislature finds that the state has a pool of excellent and
9 experienced educators who could be an invaluable resource to help
10 beginning teachers weather their difficult first years of teaching.
11 Research indicates that providing mentors for first year teachers
12 results in an improved retention rate of those teachers, therefore
13 every beginning teacher should have an opportunity to work with a
14 trained peer mentor. Research also indicates that mentors must be
15 skilled and well-trained in order to effectively assist new teachers.
16 The legislature finds that matching excellent educators with new
17 teachers and teacher candidates will help school districts begin to
18 develop additional leadership and compensation opportunities for those
19 exemplary teachers who act as mentors for beginning teachers, teacher

1 candidates, and other interested colleagues. The legislature further
2 finds that the existing beginning teacher assistance program needs to
3 be refocused to more effectively provide training and peer mentors for
4 new teachers.

5 The legislature intends to refocus the beginning teacher assistance
6 program and replace it with a peer mentor program that emphasizes close
7 working relationships between a beginning teacher and an experienced
8 peer mentor, frequent observations, the development and implementation
9 of professional development plans, the provision to beginning teachers
10 of assistance in devising strategies to raise student achievement, and
11 high-quality research-based training programs for peer mentors.

12 In addition, an essential component of teacher preparation is the
13 opportunity for students in teacher preparation programs to learn from
14 experienced classroom teachers. The legislature recognizes the
15 importance of actual classroom experience in the training of new
16 teachers, and therefore intends to provide an incentive to exceptional,
17 experienced teachers to guide student teachers' classroom-based student
18 teaching experiences.

19 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.415.250 and 1993 c 336 s 401 are each amended to
20 read as follows:

21 (1) The peer mentor program is established. The purpose of the
22 program is to nurture professional growth and excellence in a beginning
23 teacher through special training and focused assistance provided by an
24 experienced, trained, and excellent peer mentor.

25 (2) To the extent that funding is provided for this specific
26 purpose, the superintendent of public instruction shall ((adopt rules
27 to establish and operate a teacher assistance program. For the
28 purposes of this section, the terms "mentor teachers," "beginning
29 teachers," and "experienced teachers" may include any person possessing
30 any one of the various certificates issued by the superintendent of
31 public instruction under RCW 28A.410.010. The program shall provide
32 for:

33 (1) Assistance by mentor teachers who will provide a source of
34 continuing and sustained support to beginning teachers, or experienced
35 teachers who are having difficulties, or both, both in and outside the
36 classroom. A mentor teacher may not be involved in evaluations under
37 RCW 28A.405.100 of a teacher who receives assistance from said mentor
38 teacher under the teacher assistance program established under this

1 section. The mentor teachers shall also periodically inform their
2 principals respecting the contents of training sessions and other
3 program activities;

4 (2) Stipends for mentor teachers and beginning and experienced
5 teachers which shall not be deemed compensation for the purposes of
6 salary lid compliance under RCW 28A.400.200: PROVIDED, That stipends
7 shall not be subject to the continuing contract provisions of this
8 title;

9 (3) Workshops for the training of mentor and beginning teachers;

10 (4) The use of substitutes to give mentor teachers, beginning
11 teachers, and experienced teachers opportunities to jointly observe and
12 evaluate teaching situations and to give mentor teachers opportunities
13 to observe and assist beginning and experienced teachers in the
14 classroom;

15 (5) Mentor teachers who are superior teachers based on their
16 evaluations, pursuant to RCW 28A.405.010 through 28A.405.240, and who
17 hold valid continuing certificates;

18 (6) Mentor teachers shall be selected by the district and may serve
19 as mentors up to and including full time. If a bargaining unit,
20 certified pursuant to RCW 41.59.090 exists within the district,
21 classroom teachers representing the bargaining unit shall participate
22 in the mentor teacher selection process; and

23 (7) Periodic consultation by the superintendent of public
24 instruction or the superintendent's designee with representatives of
25 educational organizations and associations, including educational
26 service districts and public and private institutions of higher
27 education, for the purposes of improving communication and cooperation
28 and program review)) distribute funding to an eligible peer mentor
29 program. An eligible peer mentor program is a program that provides to
30 a beginning teacher services that include but need not be limited to:

31 (a) An orientation process and individualized assistance to help a
32 beginning teacher prepare for the start of a school year;

33 (b) The assignment of a peer mentor whose responsibilities to the
34 beginning teacher include but need not be limited to constructive
35 feedback, the modeling of instructional strategies, and frequent
36 meetings and other forms of contact;

37 (c) The provision by peer mentors of strategies, training, and
38 guidance in critical areas such as classroom management, student
39 discipline, curriculum management, instructional skill, assessment,

1 communication skills, and professional conduct. A district may provide
2 these components through a variety of means including one-on-one
3 contact and workshops offered by peer mentors to groups, including
4 cohort groups, of beginning teachers;

5 (d) Since observation is one of the critical tools that peer
6 mentors need to use to help assess a beginning teacher's professional
7 development, the provision of release time, substitutes, mentor
8 training in observation techniques, and other measures for both peer
9 mentors and beginning teachers, to allow each an adequate amount of
10 time to observe the other and to provide the classroom experience that
11 each needs to work together effectively;

12 (e) Assistance in the incorporation of the essential academic
13 learning requirements into instructional plans and in the development
14 of complex teaching strategies, including strategies to raise the
15 achievement of students with diverse learning styles and backgrounds;

16 (f) Guidance and assistance in the development and implementation
17 of a professional growth plan. The plan shall include a professional
18 self-evaluation component and one or more informal performance
19 assessments. A peer mentor may not be involved in any evaluation under
20 RCW 28A.405.100 of a beginning teacher whom the peer mentor has
21 assisted through this program.

22 (3) In addition to the services provided in subsection (2) of this
23 section, an eligible peer mentor program shall include but need not be
24 limited to the following components:

25 (a) Strong collaboration among the peer mentor, the beginning
26 teacher's principal, and the beginning teacher; and

27 (b) Stipends for peer mentors and, at the option of a district, for
28 beginning teachers. The stipends shall not be deemed compensation for
29 the purposes of salary lid compliance under RCW 28A.400.200 and are not
30 subject to the continuing contract provisions of this title.

31 (4) To the extent that resources are available for this purpose
32 and that assistance to beginning teachers is not adversely impacted,
33 the program may serve more experienced teachers who request the
34 assistance of peer mentors.

35 (5) To the extent that funding is provided for this specific
36 purpose, the superintendent of public instruction shall operate a
37 mentor academy to help districts provide effective training for peer
38 mentors. Districts are encouraged to include in their programs academy
39 training for peer mentors.

1 (6) To the maximum extent possible, the superintendent shall
2 simplify and minimize reporting requirements for the peer mentor
3 program. As part of the program, the superintendent may develop a
4 system to track data on the teaching assignments, retention, and
5 mobility of beginning teachers and may conduct surveys of participants
6 to assess program effectiveness. Districts that are participating in
7 the peer mentor program shall provide such data to the tracking system.

8 (7) By December 1, 2001, districts shall incorporate into their
9 state-funded assistance programs for beginning teachers the
10 requirements in subsection (2) of this section. Until December 1,
11 2001, districts may receive state funds to assist beginning teachers
12 without meeting all the requirements of subsection (2) of this section.

13 (8) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
14 section.

15 (a) "Peer mentor" means an educator, including an individual in
16 retirement status, who is selected by the district to serve in that
17 capacity up to and including full time, and who meets the following
18 qualifications:

19 (i) Possession of one or more valid certificates issued by the
20 superintendent of public instruction under RCW 28A.410.010;

21 (ii) Possession of five or more years of teaching experience;

22 (iii) Stature as an excellent teacher as determined by criteria
23 developed by the district in cooperation with the local bargaining unit
24 representing classroom teachers;

25 (iv) Experience, skills, and interest in facilitating adult
26 learning.

27 If a bargaining unit, certified pursuant to RCW 41.59.090, exists
28 within the district, classroom teachers representing the bargaining
29 unit shall participate in the peer mentor selection process.

30 (b) "Beginning teacher" means a first or second year teacher who
31 holds a valid residency, provisional, or initial certificate issued by
32 the superintendent of public instruction under RCW 28A.410.010.

33 (c) "Mentor academy" means a statewide training program for peer
34 mentors organized and coordinated by the superintendent of public
35 instruction, in consultation with the state board of education, the
36 professional educator standards board, the association of school
37 principals, and other interested organizations.

38 (d) "District" means a school district or educational service
39 district.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410

2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) "Cooperating teacher" means a teacher who:

4 (a) Holds a continuing or professional certificate and supervises
5 and mentors a student teacher in a public school;

6 (b) Is an excellent teacher based on the teacher's evaluations
7 pursuant to RCW 28A.405.100;

8 (c) Has at least four school years of teaching experience; and

9 (d) Holds high expectations for students and demonstrates the
10 ability to help students achieve at high levels and meet or exceed any
11 academic standards adopted by the school district and the state.

12 (2) "Student teacher" means a candidate for initial or residency
13 teacher certification who is in a state board of education-approved
14 teacher preparation program in a public or private institution of
15 higher education in Washington, and who is student teaching in a public
16 school.

17 (3) "Student teaching" means a field experience lasting a minimum
18 of approximately a full academic quarter during which the student
19 teacher participates in instructional activities and assumes both part-
20 time and full-time teaching responsibilities under the supervision of
21 the cooperating teacher. Student teaching does not mean field
22 experiences that are limited to opportunities for observation,
23 tutoring, microteaching, extended practicums, and clinical and
24 laboratory experiences that do not fall within the meaning of student
25 teaching.

26 (4) If funding to pay stipends to cooperating teachers is provided
27 in the omnibus appropriations act, the amount of the stipend shall be
28 adjusted to conform with any budget proviso and funding for the
29 stipends shall be provided by the office of the superintendent of
30 public instruction to the school district that employs the cooperating
31 teacher or to the educational service district to which the district
32 belongs, as appropriate. The school district or educational service
33 district shall pay the full amount of the stipend to the cooperating
34 teacher. Any funds provided through the omnibus appropriations act for
35 stipends shall supplement and not supplant stipends and other forms of
36 monetary assistance provided to cooperating teachers during the
37 previous academic year by institutions of higher education with
38 approved teacher preparation programs. The institution of higher
39 education shall use, at a minimum, the base year funding amounts to

1 directly support cooperating teachers. The support may include, in
2 combination or separately, higher stipends, material and supplies, and
3 tuition assistance or academic scholarships.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If specific funding for the purposes of
5 section 2 of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter and
6 section numbers, is not provided by June 30, 2001, in the omnibus
7 appropriations act, section 2 of this act is null and void.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** If specific funding for the purposes of
9 section 3 of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter and
10 section numbers, is not provided by June 30, 2001, in the omnibus
11 appropriations act, section 3 of this act is null and void.

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