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**SENATE BILL 5459**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Rolfes, Zeiger, Billig, and Frockt; by request of Request of the Governor

AN ACT Relating to the beginning educator support team program; amending RCW 28A.415.265; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  INTENT. (1) The legislature finds that support and mentoring from exemplary educators for beginning teachers and principals improves the ability of beginning teachers and principals to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population and has strong positive effects on student learning.

(2) The legislature further finds that the state's beginning educator support team (BEST) program has proven effective and is in high demand by school districts across the state.

(3) Therefore, the legislature intends to expand the beginning educator support team program for teachers and to add a program component for beginning principals.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.415.265 and 2016 c 233 s 11 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) For the purposes of this section, a mentor is an educator who has ((~~achieved appropriate~~)) successfully completed training in assisting, coaching, and advising beginning principals, teachers, or student teaching residents as defined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction((~~, such as national board certification or other specialized training~~)); been selected using mentor standards developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction; and is participating in ongoing mentor skills professional development.

(2)(a) The beginning educator support team program is established to provide professional development and ((~~mentor support~~)) mentoring for beginning ((~~educators~~)) principals, teachers, and candidates in alternative route teacher certification programs under RCW 28A.660.040((~~, and educators on probation under RCW 28A.405.100, to be composed of the beginning educator support team for beginning educators and continuous improvement coaching for educators on probation, as provided in this section~~)).

(b) The superintendent of public instruction shall notify school districts about the beginning educator support team program and encourage districts to apply for program funds.

(3) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall allocate funds for the beginning educator support team program on a competitive basis to individual school districts or consortia of districts. School districts are encouraged to include educational service districts in creating regional consortia. In allocating funds, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall give priority to:

(a) School districts with low-performing schools identified under RCW 28A.657.020 as being challenged schools in need of improvement; ((~~and~~))

(b) School districts with a large influx of beginning classroom teachers; and

(c) School districts that demonstrate an understanding of the research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

(4) A portion of the appropriated funds may be used for program coordination and provision of statewide or regional professional development through the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

(5) A beginning educator support team program must include the following components:

(a) A paid instructional orientation or individualized assistance before the start of the school year for ((~~beginning educators~~)) program participants;

(b) Assignment of a trained and qualified mentor for ((~~the first~~)) up to three years for ((~~beginning educators~~)) program participants, with intensive support in the first year and decreasing support over the following years ((~~depending on the needs of the beginning educator~~));

(c) A goal to provide ((~~beginning teachers~~)) program participants from underrepresented populations with a mentor who has strong ties to underrepresented populations;

(d) Ongoing professional development for ((~~beginning educators~~)) program participants that is designed to meet their unique needs for supplemental training and skill development;

(e) Initial and ongoing professional development for mentors;

(f) Release time for mentors and ((~~their designated educators~~)) program participants to work together, as well as time for ((~~educators~~)) program participants to observe accomplished peers; ((~~and~~))

(g) When possible, an assignment for beginning principals and teachers that is less challenging than that of more experienced colleagues;

(h) Nonevaluative observations with written feedback for program participants;

(i) Support in understanding and participating in the state and district evaluation process and using the instructional or leadership framework, or both, to promote growth;

(j) Adherence to research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction; and

(k) A program evaluation using a standard evaluation tool provided from the office of the superintendent of public instruction that measures increased knowledge, skills, and positive impact on student learning for program participants and identified areas of program development, including increased retention of beginning principals and teachers.

(6) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the beginning educator support team program components under subsection (3) of this section may be provided for continuous improvement coaching to support educators on probation under RCW 28A.405.100.

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