

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6138

As of February 2, 2020

Title: An act relating to supports for beginning educators and mentors.

Brief Description: Concerning the beginning educator support team program.

Sponsors: Senators Hasegawa, Nguyen and Wilson, C.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/24/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the purpose of the Beginning Educator Support Team Program to include support for mentor educators and beginning educators of underrepresented populations.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction also give grant priority to schools and districts that have taken action, or have specific plans in place, to provide program participants from underrepresented populations a mentor who has strong ties to these populations.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Beginning Educator Support Team Program. The Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program provides professional development and mentor support for beginning principals, beginning educational staff associates, beginning teachers, and candidates in alternative route teacher certification programs.

The BEST Program must include specified components, including:

- a paid instructional orientation or individualized assistance before the start of the school year;
- a trained and qualified mentor assigned to each program participant for up to three years;

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- a goal to provide program participants from underrepresented populations a mentor who has strong ties to underrepresented populations;
- ongoing professional development for mentors;
- release time for mentors and program participants to work together, as well as time for program participants to observe accomplished peers;
- nonevaluative observations with written feedback;
- support in understanding and participating in the state and district evaluation process and using the instructional framework, leadership framework, or both, to promote growth;
- adherence to research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); and
- a program evaluation that identifies program strengths and gaps using the standards for beginning educator induction, the retention of beginning educators, and positive impact on student growth for program participants.

Grant funding for the BEST Program is administered by OSPI, subject to state funding. The grant funds are provided on a competitive basis. When allocating funds, OSPI must give priority to schools and districts identified for supports, schools with a large influx of beginning principals, educational staff associates, or classroom teachers, and school districts that demonstrate an understanding of the research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by OSPI.

Summary of Bill: The purpose of the BEST Program is modified to include support for mentor educators and beginning educators of underrepresented populations. When allocating funds for the BEST Program and in addition to current requirements, OSPI must give priority to schools and districts that have taken action or have specific plans in place to provide program participants from underrepresented populations a mentor who has strong ties to underrepresented populations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a large underrepresentation of teachers of color in Washington State, and current teachers of color do not feel represented in their mentorship. Re-focusing the funding of the program will better help teachers of color obtain mentors to which they can relate. A strong mentorship program strengthens the skills of teachers and teacher retention. Having mentors of colors can help reduce some of the burden on new teachers of color. Mentorship is the most important thing to keep and retain teachers. The modifications that the bill makes helps teachers who often face a heavy burdens. The program has been very successful, but there is a need for more funding in order to meet the demand that exists.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Bob Hasegawa, Prime Sponsor; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Sue Anderson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Bob Cooper, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.