

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5773

As of February 22, 2001

Title: An act relating to peer mentor programs.

Brief Description: Creating a peer mentor program.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Carlson, Rasmussen, Zarelli, Fraser, Kohl-Welles, Kastama, Prentice, Finkbeiner, Regala and Costa; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/22/01.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Staff: Casey Bui (786-7448)

Background: Since 1985, the Legislature has provided state funds for beginning teacher assistance programs through the Teacher Assistance Program. The program has served both beginning and experienced teachers needing assistance. A 1999 study by the Washington Institute for Public Policy found that not all eligible teachers are served by this program. Approximately 2,500 individuals will participate in the 2000-2001 school year.

Summary of Bill: The Teacher Assistance Program is renamed the Peer Mentor Program and its requirements are revised. To the extent that funding is provided, peer mentor services are provided to first and second-year teachers. More experienced teachers may request participation in the mentor program if participation would not adversely impact assistance to beginning teachers. A peer mentor is defined as a current or retired educator who possesses a valid certificate, has five years of teaching experience, stature as an excellent teacher, and has experience, skills, and interest in facilitating adult learning.

Mentor programs must include strong collaboration among the peer mentor, the beginning teacher's principal and the beginning teacher. Stipends for peer mentors are also required. The school district may choose to provide stipends for beginning teachers. Other mandatory provisions are enumerated.

To the extent that funds are made available, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) operates a mentor academy to provide training to mentors. School districts are encouraged, but not required, to use the mentor academy as part of their peer mentor programs.

OSPI must simplify and minimize reporting requirements for the program. However, OSPI may develop a system to track data on the teaching assignments, retention and mobility of beginning teachers. Participating districts report that information to OSPI.

A majority of the eligibility provisions must be incorporated into a mentor program by December 1, 2001, although distribution of state funds may occur sooner.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 5, 2001.

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