
HOUSE BILL 1639

State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Representatives Keiser, Talcott, Cox, Pearson, Quall, Santos, Haigh and Schual-Berke; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Read first time 01/31/2001. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to peer mentor programs; amending RCW 28A.415.250;
2 and creating a new section.

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

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

1 needs to be refocused to more effectively provide training and peer
2 mentors for new teachers.

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

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

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

16 (2) To the extent that funding is provided for this specific
17 purpose, the superintendent of public instruction shall ((adopt rules
18 to establish and operate a teacher assistance program. For the
19 purposes of this section, the terms "mentor teachers," "beginning
20 teachers," and "experienced teachers" may include any person possessing
21 any one of the various certificates issued by the superintendent of
22 public instruction under RCW 28A.410.010. The program shall provide
23 for:

24 (1) Assistance by mentor teachers who will provide a source of
25 continuing and sustained support to beginning teachers, or experienced
26 teachers who are having difficulties, or both, both in and outside the
27 classroom. A mentor teacher may not be involved in evaluations under
28 RCW 28A.405.100 of a teacher who receives assistance from said mentor
29 teacher under the teacher assistance program established under this
30 section. The mentor teachers shall also periodically inform their
31 principals respecting the contents of training sessions and other
32 program activities;

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

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

1 ~~(4) The use of substitutes to give mentor teachers, beginning~~
2 ~~teachers, and experienced teachers opportunities to jointly observe and~~
3 ~~evaluate teaching situations and to give mentor teachers opportunities~~
4 ~~to observe and assist beginning and experienced teachers in the~~
5 ~~classroom;~~

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

9 ~~(6) Mentor teachers shall be selected by the district and may serve~~
10 ~~as mentors up to and including full time. If a bargaining unit,~~
11 ~~certified pursuant to RCW 41.59.090 exists within the district,~~
12 ~~classroom teachers representing the bargaining unit shall participate~~
13 ~~in the mentor teacher selection process; and~~

14 ~~(7) Periodic consultation by the superintendent of public~~
15 ~~instruction or the superintendent's designee with representatives of~~
16 ~~educational organizations and associations, including educational~~
17 ~~service districts and public and private institutions of higher~~
18 ~~education, for the purposes of improving communication and cooperation~~
19 ~~and program review)) distribute funding to an eligible peer mentor~~
20 ~~program. An eligible peer mentor program is a program that provides to~~
21 ~~a beginning teacher services that include but need not be limited to:~~

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

24 ~~(b) The assignment of a peer mentor whose responsibilities to the~~
25 ~~beginning teacher include but need not be limited to constructive~~
26 ~~feedback, the modeling of instructional strategies, and frequent~~
27 ~~meetings and other forms of contact;~~

28 ~~(c) The provision by peer mentors of strategies, training, and~~
29 ~~guidance in critical areas such as classroom management, student~~
30 ~~discipline, curriculum management, instructional skill, assessment,~~
31 ~~communication skills, and professional conduct. A district may provide~~
32 ~~these components through a variety of means including one-on-one~~
33 ~~contact and workshops offered by peer mentors to groups, including~~
34 ~~cohort groups, of beginning teachers;~~

35 ~~(d) Since observation is one of the critical tools that peer~~
36 ~~mentors need to use to help assess a beginning teacher's professional~~
37 ~~development, the provision of release time, substitutes, mentor~~
38 ~~training in observation techniques, and other measures for both peer~~
39 ~~mentors and beginning teachers, to allow each an adequate amount of~~

1 time to observe the other and to provide the classroom experience that
2 each needs to work together effectively;

3 (e) Assistance in the incorporation of the essential academic
4 learning requirements into instructional plans and in the development
5 of complex teaching strategies, including strategies to raise the
6 achievement of students with diverse learning styles and backgrounds;

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

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

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

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

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

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

31 (6) To the maximum extent possible, the superintendent shall
32 simplify and minimize reporting requirements for the peer mentor
33 program. As part of the program, the superintendent may develop a
34 system to track data on the teaching assignments, retention, and
35 mobility of beginning teachers and may conduct surveys of participants
36 to assess program effectiveness. Districts that are participating in
37 the peer mentor program shall provide such data to the tracking system.

38 (7) By December 1, 2001, districts shall incorporate into their
39 state-funded assistance programs for beginning teachers the

1 requirements in subsection (2) of this section. Until December 1,
2 2001, districts may receive state funds to assist beginning teachers
3 without meeting all the requirements of subsection (2) of this section.

4 (8) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
5 section.

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

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

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

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

16 (iv) Experience, skills, and interest in facilitating adult
17 learning.

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

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

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

29 (d) "District" means a school district or educational service
30 district.

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