
Education Committee

HB 2654

Brief Description: Providing for elementary math specialists.

Sponsors: Representatives Wallace, Seaquist, Probst, Quall, Ormsby, Simpson, Kelley and Anderson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Defines an Elementary Math Specialist (Specialist) as an elementary teacher with a specialty endorsement in elementary mathematics.
- Directs the Professional Educator Standards Board to adopt a specialty endorsement for Specialists, based on standards that include enhanced mathematics content knowledge for grades K-6 and instructional strategies.
- Includes an allocation for one Specialist per prototypical elementary school in the new basic education funding formula that takes effect September 1, 2011.

Hearing Date: 1/20/10

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Teaching Endorsements.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is the state agency that establishes requirements for teacher certification.

A teacher must have an endorsement to his or her teaching certificate to teach a particular subject. At the secondary level, endorsements are based on specific academic subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, English, etc.). A teacher with an elementary education endorsement can teach any academic subject to students in grades K-8.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The PESB has also created a procedure for adding specialty endorsements that are not required for the teacher to teach that subject. To date, there are three specialty endorsements: (1)Deaf Education, (2)Gifted Education, and (3)Environmental and Sustainability Education.

A number of states, including Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, and Arizona, have created some form of endorsement in teaching elementary mathematics. In some cases the state requires this endorsement for teaching certain grade levels; in other cases the endorsement is an optional supplement.

Prototypical School Funding Formula.

Legislation enacted in 2009 establishes a new state funding formula for basic education, to take effect September 1, 2011. The formula will allocate funds based on assumed levels of staff and other resources for so-called "prototypical" schools that serve an assumed number of students at the elementary, middle, and high school level. The structure of the formula, which appears in statute, provides allocations for classroom teachers at an assumed class size, plus other building-level staff such as principals, teacher-librarians, counselors, office support, etc. The number of staff that would be allocated under the formula does not currently appear in statute. These various staffing categories are "for allocation purposes only"; actual staffing decisions are made by school districts.

Summary of Bill:

Elementary Math Specialist.

An Elementary Math Specialist (Specialist) is defined as an elementary teacher with a specialty elementary mathematics endorsement approved by the PESB. The intended role of a Specialist is to provide direct instruction to students in grades K-6 using an itinerant teacher model where the Specialist moves from classroom to classroom. Specialists may also coach the regular classroom teacher and demonstrate best practices. School districts are encouraged to place a priority on schools with large numbers of students struggling in math when assigning Specialists.

The PESB is directed to adopt a specialty endorsement for Specialists. The endorsement must be based on standards that include demonstration of enhanced mathematics content knowledge and skills for grades K-6, as well as knowledge and skills in instructional strategies that engage students in learning mathematics and are targeted for students struggling with mathematics. To the maximum extent possible, additional knowledge and skills for the endorsement must be performance-based and require a minimum amount of additional coursework. Any coursework required must be widely accessible across the state.

Prototypical School Funding Formula.

Beginning September 1, 2011, the funding formula includes one Specialist for each prototypical elementary school. This staff category is for allocation purposes only.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2010.

Effective Date: Sections 2 and 3 defining an Elementary Math Specialist and creating a staff allocation within the prototypical school funding formula take effect September 1, 2011. The

remainder of the bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.