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**HOUSE BILL 1981**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Pollet

AN ACT Relating to a pilot project on elementary science education programs; adding new sections to chapter 28A.630 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that a school district program of intentional high quality support for teachers is necessary to ensure that every elementary student receives strong science instruction. The legislature also finds that elementary students exposed to scientific inquiry and theories, and mentored or coached teacher programs will be better prepared to succeed in the sciences later in their schooling, and as part of the workforce. Therefore, a pilot project that develops a system of support for teachers and students must be implemented to improve teaching quality and student achievement in the sciences.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this section and sections 3 through 6 of this act.

(1) "Free or reduced-price lunch" means lunch served by a school district that qualifies for federal reimbursement as free or reduce-price lunch under the national school lunch program.

(2) "Initial use class" means a class for elementary science teachers that describes how to use science kits and is facilitated by a lead teacher.

(3) "Lead teacher" means a master science teacher who facilitates an initial use class.

(4) "Master science teacher" means a certificated teacher experienced in teaching K-5 inquiry-based science subjects, having the qualifications determined by the science advisory board, and released from the classroom to provide instruction, training, and mentoring in science education to other elementary school teachers, including preparation and use of appropriate curriculum and experiential science education materials.

(5) "Materials center" means the district staff and resources used to create, deliver, and refurbish science kits.

(6) "Project" means the elementary science education program pilot project described in section 5 of this act.

(7) "Project administrator" means the district staff member responsible for overseeing the project in each district, hiring and evaluating the master science teachers, and composing annual reports.

(8) "Science kit" means all the materials needed for a science project or activity.

(9) "Title I funds" means federal funds provided to elementary and secondary schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet state academic standards.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The elementary science education program pilot project is created. To participate in the project, a school district in the state may submit an application to the office of the superintendent of public instruction as provided in section 4 of this act.

(2) The purpose of the project is to provide elementary students with strong science instruction by creating a system of support for teachers and students. This system of support has four key elements:

(a) Strong administrative and community support;

(b) Ongoing, high quality professional development;

(c) High quality curriculum materials and materials support; and

(d) Assessment of students and evaluation of project.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) By ninety days after the effective date of this section, subject to funds appropriated specifically for this purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall develop a competitive application process as described in this section for the project.

(2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall develop requirements for applications to include:

(a) The district's rational for its selection;

(b) A list of administrators, teachers, and community members who are interested in becoming members of a science advisory board;

(c) A preliminary plan for providing high quality professional development to elementary science teachers; and

(d) A plan for what science education curriculum and materials the district will use and how the district will provide for mentoring and instructing elementary school teachers in the use of the curriculum and materials.

(3) A school district or educational service district seeking approval to participate in the project shall submit an application of intent to the office of the superintendent of public instruction by one hundred fifty days after the effective date of this section.

(4) No later than one hundred eighty days after the effective date of this section, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall review the applications and select three applicants for participation in the project:

(a) A large urban school district with greater than twenty-five thousand students;

(b) A rural district; and

(c) An urban district with a high percentage of students receiving or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches, and schools that receive or are eligible to receive federal Title I funds.

(5) Subject to funds appropriated specifically for this purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall allocate grants to the selected applicants to be used for development and implementation of an elementary science education program under section 5 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The project must:

(1) Ensure strong administrative and community support by establishing a science advisory board for the district school board and district superintendent that includes university science education experts; community and industry scientists; representation from the school board, assistant superintendent, and executive director of the teaching and learning division of the office of the district superintendent; the district science program manager; the master science teachers; teacher leaders; representation from the teachers' union; and parents. The advisory board must:

(a) Provide leadership through effective collaboration;

(b) Develop a common, shared vision and ensure that the program remains focused on that vision while aligning with secondary science content and next generation science standards; and

(c) Define the qualifications of a master science teacher and oversee the hiring and evaluation of the master science teachers;

(2) Support student learning and teacher instruction by:

(a) Using grade-level specific, high quality curriculum and materials supports developed by master science teachers in collaboration with university science education experts through repeated field testing in diverse locations; and

(b) Maintaining a district materials center;

(3) Assess student learning by supplying teachers with formative science kit assessments developed by the master science teachers; and

(4) Provide ongoing, high quality professional development that includes:

(a) Highly qualified professional development providers who shall:

(i) Adapt the grade-specific science curriculum to the next generation science standards;

(ii) Ensure that quality professional development is offered to support teachers' use of the curriculum and science kits;

(iii) Develop the capacity of teachers at various levels of experience and knowledge;

(iv) Recruit, mentor, and support the lead teachers;

(v) Make instructional decisions based on current data, research, and best practices;

(vi) Manage the logistics, content, and materials for initial use classes and lead teacher meetings; and

(vii) Work with outside experts to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to implement this subsection;

(b) Recognition of teachers' need for a curriculum connected to the next generation science standards, prepared materials, and instruction on the content, pedagogy, and inquiry skills for the science units;

(c) Improvements based on teacher feedback and field-testing of professional development content, instructional materials, and instructional guides;

(d) Multiple types of opportunities over time;

(e) Instruction on the benefits of continuity;

(f) Science-writing and teacher leadership courses based on the science-writing program developed by the Seattle public schools; and

(g) Additional compensation for teachers who attend professional development opportunities outside of work hours.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Each district participating in the project must be evaluated by outside evaluators through observations, surveys, and interviews to ensure that the steps taken to implement the project are productive and achieve the purpose described in section 3 of this act. By August 31, 2017, the evaluator shall provide formative feedback to the master science teachers and project administrators and provide the superintendents, school boards, and advisory boards with evaluation reports.

(2) Each project administrator must submit a biennial progress report to the office of the superintendent of public instruction beginning October 31, 2017. The report must describe:

(a) The vision developed by the science advisory board;

(b) The qualifications of a master science teacher developed by the advisory board;

(c) The progress of the master science teachers in developing or using a grade-level specific science curriculum and a professional education program;

(d) Best practices developed and lessons learned;

(e) A summary of student performance in the project compared to student performance before implementation of the project;

(f) Suggestions for expanding best practices to a larger scale; and

(g) The method the district uses to measure student growth in learning science concepts.

(3) By December 31, 2017, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall provide to the appropriate committees of the legislature a report that compiles and summarizes the reports from each district in a standard format and a recommendation whether the project should be modified, continued, and expanded to include other elementary schools in the state, or expanded to include middle and high schools.

(4) If the project is continued, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall submit biennial recommendations and reports.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act expires June 30, 2018.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 7 of this act are each added to chapter 28A.630 RCW.

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