

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6241

As of February 1, 2016

Title: An act relating to improving the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers by raising salaries and strengthening teacher mentoring.

Brief Description: Improving the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers by raising salaries and strengthening teacher mentoring.

Sponsors: Senators Billig, Rolfes, Keiser, Lias, Conway, McAuliffe, Habib and Chase; by request of Governor Inslee.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/26/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Alia Kennedy (786-7405)

Background: The Legislature allocates money to each school district for state-funded school employee salaries. The actual salaries paid to certificated instructional staff and classified staff are subject to the collective bargaining process, within certain minimum and maximum requirements.

State funding for teacher and other certificated instructional staff salaries is provided through the state salary allocation model, which uses education and years of experience to vary the salary levels. The salary allocation is increased for each additional year of experience, up to 16 years, and for additional education. School district's must pay at least the minimum salary on the state salary allocation model and cannot exceed the average salary calculated on the state salary allocation model.

There is no state salary allocation model for certificated administrative staff or classified staff such as bus drivers, food service workers, custodial staff, and classroom aides. Each school district receives an allocation for these staff based on historical salary allocations, adjusted for cost-of-living increases.

In the 2012 Washington Supreme Court decision *McCleary v State*, the Court found that the state had failed to meet its paramount constitutional duty to amply fund the costs of its basic

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education program. As part of that decision, the Court identified state salary allocations as an area of shortfall.

Summary of Bill: Beginning the 2016-2017 school year, the minimum base salary for beginning certificated instructional staff is \$40,000 per year. The salary for other positions, including certificated administrative and classified staff, increases by at least 1 percent.

Appropriates \$71,780,000 to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for school employee compensation adjustments.

Appropriates \$7,823,000 to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for local effort assistance.

Appropriates \$5,000,000 to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to support a mentoring program for beginning teachers.

Appropriates \$67,000 to the Washington State School for the Blind and the Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss in order to implement base salary increases for certificated instructional and classified staff.

Appropriation: Appropriates \$71,780,000 to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for school employee compensation adjustments.

Appropriates \$7,823,000 to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for local effort assistance.

Appropriates \$5,000,000 to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to support a mentoring program for beginning teachers.

Appropriates \$44,000 to the Washington State School for the Blind in order to implement base salary increases for certificated instructional and classified staff.

Appropriates \$23,000 to the Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss in order to implement base salary increases for certificated instructional and classified staff.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Legislature is aware of the teacher recruitment and retention crisis, and that it affects student learning. Compensation is a big part, but the solution is not just money. In addition to increasing teacher salaries, the bill also supports beginning teacher mentoring. Compensation and mentoring are key factors in recruiting and retaining beginning teachers. This bill is comprehensive and ensures that Washington has a highly qualified, effective teacher in every classroom. A base salary of \$40,000 a year is supported by research. The bill makes progress in creating competitive

market wages and investing in a strong mentorship program to support beginning teachers. Education must be seen as a viable and rewarding career in order to attract teachers and keep their expertise in the classroom, which requires changes in compensation, working conditions, and professional autonomy. Teacher voices must be heard when making decisions at the local and legislative levels. High quality mentorship programs for beginning teachers is critical to their success and retention. The bill is a great start but teacher pay should be higher. A 1 percent increase for experienced teachers is not enough. Mentorship in rural areas is particularly important. Further tapping local levy dollars has the potential to exacerbate inequity in the coming years.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Kim Mead, Washington Education Association; Deb Merle, Governor's Policy Office; Kate Davis, Office of Financial Management; Jim Kowalkowski, Superintendent of Davenport School District and Director of the Rural Education Center; David Brenna, Professional Educator Standards Board; Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors' Association.

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