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HOUSE BILL 2727

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Stokesbary, Hickel, Zeiger, Manweller, S. Hunt, Pollet, and Johnson

Read first time 01/19/16. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to teacher retention; adding a new section to  
2 chapter 28A.405 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28A.660 RCW; and  
3 creating new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that: (1) The  
6 educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee  
7 reported in 2015 that "The opportunity gap in Washington state is  
8 persistent, pervasive, and unacceptable"; (2) every child should have  
9 an equal opportunity to learn, regardless of the child's zip code,  
10 poverty level, or race; (3) additional compensation in the form of  
11 annual teacher bonuses is essential to recruiting and retaining  
12 teachers to work in challenging, high poverty schools; and (4)  
13 Washington is currently experiencing a statewide teacher shortage.  
14 The legislature recognizes a need to increase the number of teachers  
15 willing to work in challenging, high poverty schools, both because  
16 the opportunity gap is most pervasive at these schools and because  
17 such schools are among those most impacted by the statewide teacher  
18 shortage. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to address  
19 the opportunity gap and the statewide teacher shortfall by providing  
20 additional compensation in the form of college loan forgiveness and

1 annual bonuses to teachers who work in challenging, high poverty  
2 schools.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
4 throughout sections 3 through 6 of this act unless the context  
5 clearly requires otherwise.

6 (1) "Challenging, high poverty schools" means schools where, for  
7 the prior school year, the student headcount enrollment eligible for  
8 the federal free or reduced-price lunch program was, as determined by  
9 the October 1st count of the comprehensive education data and  
10 research system (CEDARS) or successor data collection and reporting  
11 systems of the office of the superintendent of public instruction on  
12 May 1st of that prior year, at least:

13 (a) Seventy percent for elementary schools;

14 (b) Sixty percent for middle schools; or

15 (c) Fifty percent for high schools.

16 (2) "Eligible teacher" means a teacher who qualifies for a  
17 student loan repayment under sections 3 and 4 of this act.

18 (3) "Student loan" means a federal student loan that is repaid in  
19 whole or in part if the recipient renders service as a teacher in an  
20 approved challenging, high poverty school in Washington state.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The office of the superintendent of public  
22 instruction shall administer student loan repayments by direct  
23 payments on behalf of an eligible teacher to the holder of such loan,  
24 in accordance with section 4 of this act, for any eligible teacher  
25 who:

26 (1) Is not in default on a student loan for which the eligible  
27 teacher seeks forgiveness; and

28 (2) Is employed as a full-time teacher for service in an academic  
29 year at an approved challenging, high poverty school or an  
30 educational service district.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) An eligible teacher who chooses to  
32 receive student loan repayment under this section and section 3 of  
33 this act agrees to remain employed in the school or location for  
34 which the eligible teacher gained eligibility for student loan  
35 repayment under this section and section 3 of this act.

36 (2) An eligible teacher who is employed at a challenging, high  
37 poverty school and meets the requirements of section 3 of this act in

1 any year and, in a subsequent year, fails to meet the requirements of  
2 section 3 of this act, may continue to teach in the school and may be  
3 eligible for the loan repayment program under this section and  
4 section 3 of this act in subsequent years.

5 (3)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction  
6 shall agree to make a student loan payment for an eligible teacher in  
7 the amount of two hundred fifty dollars per month for the first and  
8 second year of teaching, three hundred dollars per month for the  
9 third year of teaching, three hundred fifty dollars per month for the  
10 fourth year of teaching, and four hundred dollars per month for the  
11 fifth and sixth years of teaching.

12 (b) The maximum total amount of student loan payments made by the  
13 office of the superintendent of public instruction for an eligible  
14 teacher under this section is twenty-three thousand four hundred  
15 dollars.

16 (c) An eligible teacher shall enter repayment on any remaining  
17 principal and interest due on a student loan for which the office of  
18 the superintendent of public instruction has made payments under this  
19 section after the maximum total amount has been reached under (b) of  
20 this subsection.

21 (4) An eligible teacher who is participating in a loan repayment  
22 program under RCW 28B.102.055 or other state-funded loan repayment  
23 program, may choose to continue participating in such program or, if  
24 eligible, choose to participate in the loan repayment program under  
25 this section and section 3 of this act.

26 (5) This section and section 3 of this act do not authorize the  
27 office of the superintendent of public instruction to reimburse an  
28 eligible teacher for loan payments made before the eligible teacher  
29 entered the loan repayment program under this section and section 3  
30 of this act.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The superintendent of public instruction  
32 shall adopt rules to implement sections 3 and 4 of this act.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.405  
34 RCW to read as follows:

35 (1) Certificated classroom teachers are eligible for additional  
36 bonuses if they are employed in an instructional assignment in a  
37 challenging, high poverty school.

1 (2) "Challenging, high poverty schools" has the definition in  
2 section 2 of this act.

3 (3) School districts that employ teachers eligible for the salary  
4 bonus shall report those employees to the office of superintendent of  
5 public instruction by submitting for each employee the required data  
6 as determined by the superintendent of public instruction.

7 (4) School districts must document the eligibility of each  
8 teacher by maintaining on file evidence of employment and  
9 instructional assignments in the challenging, high poverty school.

10 (5) All requests must be submitted to the superintendent of  
11 public instruction by June 15th of the school year and shall be paid  
12 in the July apportionment and displayed on report 1197, in revenue  
13 account 4158.

14 (6) For each candidate, the superintendent of public instruction  
15 shall send the district the amount of the salary bonus set in the  
16 operating appropriations act plus an amount for the district's  
17 portion of mandatory fringe benefits. The amount of the salary bonus  
18 is two thousand five hundred dollars each school year in which the  
19 eligible teacher works in a challenging, high poverty school.

20 (7) The district must pay the bonus to the employee in a lump sum  
21 amount on a supplemental contract pursuant to RCW 28A.400.200 no  
22 later than August 31st of the school year.

23 (8) The salary bonus is included in the definition of "earnable  
24 compensation" under RCW 41.32.010.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** This act may be known and cited as the  
26 teacher retention act.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 2 through 5 of this act are each  
28 added to chapter 28A.660 RCW.

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