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## Education Committee

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### HB 1601

**Brief Description:** Concerning the beginning educator support team program.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Santos, Fey, Pollet and Slatter; by request of Office of the Governor.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the Beginning Educator Support Team program to beginning principals.
- Prioritizes grant funds to school districts that demonstrate an understanding of the research-based standards for beginning educator induction.
- Adds requirements to the program, including professional development for program participants and mentors must be ongoing; when possible, an assignment for beginning principals and teachers must be less challenging than that of more experienced colleagues; and that the required program evaluation include a measure of identified areas of program development, for example, increased retention of beginning principals and teachers.

**Hearing Date:** 2/7/17

**Staff:** Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

#### Background:

Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program. The BEST program provides professional development and mentor support for beginning educators, candidates in the alternate route teacher certification programs, and educators on probation. The BEST program must include the following components:

- a paid orientation or individualized assistance before the start of the school year for the beginning educator;
- assignment of a trained and qualified mentor for the first three years for beginning educators with intensive support in the first year and decreasing support over the following years depending on the needs of the beginning educator;

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- a goal to provide beginning educators from underrepresented populations with a mentor who has strong ties to underrepresented populations;
- professional development for beginning educators that is designed to meet their unique needs for supplemental training and skill development;
- professional development for mentors;
- release time for mentors and their designated educators to work together, as well as time for educators to observe accomplished peers; and
- a program evaluation using a standard evaluation tool provided from the OSPI that measures increased knowledge, skills, and positive impact on student learning for program participants.

Grant funding for the BEST program is administered by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The grant funds are provided on a competitive basis to individual school districts or consortia of districts. In allocating funds, the OSPI must give priority to:

- school districts with low-performing schools identified as being challenged schools in need of improvement; and
- school districts with a large influx of beginning classroom teachers.

In the 2016 supplemental operating budget, an additional \$3.5 million was provided to the BEST program, bringing the annual funding to \$9 million; the program had more applications in 2016 than funds available to distribute.

For the purposes of the BEST program, a mentor is an educator who has achieved appropriate training in assisting, coaching, and advising beginning teachers or student teaching residents as defined by the OSPI.

Standards for Beginning Teacher Induction. In 2005 the OSPI developed standards for high quality beginning teacher induction programs in Washington. In 2014, the OSPI convened a group of educators and updated these standards to align them with the expectations for teacher performance in the state's teacher evaluation system. There are standards and key elements described for hiring, orientation, mentoring, professional learning, formative assessment for teacher growth, and induction program impact. The OSPI developed a tool for program reflection, evaluation, and improvement by those with varying roles and connections to induction for beginning teachers.

Standards for Mentors Training. Legislation adopted in 2016 (i.e. Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6455, enacted as chapter 233, laws of 2016) directed the OSPI to collaborate with the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and PESB-approved teacher preparation programs to develop mentor training program goals. The OSPI must make the mentor training goals available on its website by the end of June 2017. The legislation encouraged the OSPI to use the mentorship training goals to develop professional development curricula.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The BEST program is expanded to beginning principals.

In addition to the other categories of districts, the OSPI must prioritize grant funds to school districts that demonstrate an understanding of the research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by the OSPI.

The program must assign a mentor to program participants for up to three years, rather than for the first three years. It is specified that the professional development for program participants be ongoing, and that the professional development for mentors be initial and ongoing.

In addition to other requirements, the BEST program must include the following components:

- when possible, an assignment for beginning principals and teachers that is less challenging than that of more experienced colleagues;
- nonevaluative observations with written feedback for program participants;
- support in understanding and participating in the state and district evaluation process and using the instructional or leadership framework, or both, to promote growth; and
- adherence to research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by the OSPI.

The required program evaluation must include a measure of identified areas of program development, for example, increased retention of beginning principals and teachers.

A mentor, for the purposes of the BEST program, must be selected using mentor standards developed by the OSPI and participate in ongoing mentor skills professional development.

Technical changes are made.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 31, 2017.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.