

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1119

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to educator evaluations and professional development.

Brief Description: Concerning educator evaluations and professional development.

Sponsors: Representatives McCaslin, Shea, Bergquist and Young; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/24/19, 2/7/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Modifies provisions related to the Beginning Educator Support Team Program and the Teacher Principal Evaluation Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Steele, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Callan, Corry, Harris, Kilduff, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Stonier, Thai and Valdez.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Kraft and Ybarra.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Beginning Educator Support Team Program.

The Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) Program provides professional development and mentor support for beginning teachers, candidates in alternative route teacher certification programs, and teachers on probation. The BEST Program must include

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specified components, for example: mentorship, professional development, and a program evaluation 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 districts with challenged schools in need of improvement and districts with a large influx of beginning classroom teachers.

Evaluation of Teachers and Principals.

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, most classroom teachers and principals are evaluated using a "revised" four level rating evaluation system with eight specified minimum criteria. The four levels are unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished. Teachers and principals receive a performance rating for each criteria and an overall rating for the entire evaluation, called the comprehensive summative evaluation performance rating.

All classroom teachers and principals must be evaluated each year. Except in certain cases, every four years the evaluation must be comprehensive and use all eight criteria. In the intervening years, evaluations are focused, zeroing in on a specific evaluation criterion for professional development. Classroom teachers and principals may apply focused performance evaluation professional growth activities toward the professional growth plan for professional certificate renewal. Training on the evaluation systems is a requirement for renewal of continuing or professional level teacher and principal certificates.

A steering committee composed of teachers, principals, administrators, school board members, and parents examined implementation issues and refined tools used for the evaluation system through the 2015-16 implementation phase.

In 2017 the OSPI was required to report on school district use of evaluation results for classroom teachers and principals as one of multiple factors in making human resource and personnel decisions.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Beginning Educator Support Team Program.

The BEST Program is expanded to beginning principals and beginning educational staff associates. Changes are made to mentor eligibility requirements, for example, a mentor must be selected using mentor standards developed by the OSPI and must be participating in ongoing mentor skills professional development.

State-tribal compact schools are made eligible for BEST Program grants. When allocating funds for the BEST Program, the OSPI must also prioritize school districts that demonstrate an understanding of the research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by the OSPI. The description of another set of priority schools and districts is modified to use terminology that is consistent with federal law.

Additional components are added to the BEST Program, for example: an appropriate assignment, written feedback, support in understanding and participating in the evaluation processes, and adherence to research-based standards. The required program evaluation is no longer required to be done using a standard tool, instead; it must identify program strengths and gaps using the induction standards, retention of beginning educators, and positive impact on student growth.

Language making the BEST Program subject to state funding is removed.

Evaluation of Teachers and Principals.

Except for those who require it annually, the required comprehensive performance evaluation frequency for classroom teachers and principals is reduced, from every four years, to every six years. Classroom teachers and principals may apply focused performance evaluation professional growth activities toward a professional growth plan for any level of teacher or principal certificate renewal, not just for professional certificate renewal. Training on the evaluation system is no longer required as a condition for renewal of a continuing or professional certificate.

The steering committee must include professional learning that addresses issues of equity through the lens of the selected instrumental and leadership frameworks when examining implementation and refining tools. The steering committee's work is extended indefinitely.

The OSPI must report on school district use of evaluation results for classroom teachers and principals as one of multiple factors in making human resource and personnel decisions by December 1, 2019, and December 1, 2020.

Nonsubstantive and technical changes are made, for example: the term "revised evaluation system" is replaced with the term "four-level rating evaluation system;" and language related to the "revised" evaluation implementation schedule, pilots, and related reports is removed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill:

- changes the frequency of the required comprehensive performance evaluation for classroom teachers and principals, from every five years, to every six years;
- adds that classroom teachers and principals may apply the focused performance evaluation professional growth activities toward the professional growth plan for certificate renewal, rather than only for professional certificate renewal;
- removes the requirement for training on the evaluation system as a condition for renewal of a continuing or professional certificate;
- directs the OSPI submit two additional reports on how evaluation results are used in human resource and personnel decisions;
- specifies that the BEST Program is for principals, teachers, and educational staff associates, rather than educators;
- describes schools with priority for BEST Program grants as those identified for comprehensive or targeted support under federal law, rather than as being challenged schools in need of improvement;

- removes language making the BEST Program subject to state funding; and
 - makes nonsubstantive changes such as correcting terminology and cross references.
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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 7, 2019.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Beginning teachers often lack sufficient support. Mentoring is critical. The OSPI used a stakeholder group to identify what works in beginning educator induction and subsequently published beginning teacher induction standards. This bill requires that the BEST Program use these induction standards. Research shows school districts that implemented these induction standards with fidelity saw a statistically significant 4 percent difference in the one-year retention rate of first year teachers.

Educators learn quite a bit in their preparation programs, but it is when they are doing their job on their own that they need extra help. Research indicates that having a strong mentorship for up to the first three years improves teacher effectiveness and keeps people in the profession. Additionally, those who are mentors report that the program results in professional growth and makes them want to stay in the profession.

This bill reduces the frequency of the required comprehensive performance evaluation for teachers who have been determined to be proficient or distinguished from every four years to every five years. This aligns with the certification renewal schedule. It also provides workload relief and will give teachers time to innovate their teaching practice or mentor beginning teachers. Most of the other proposed changes to the Teacher Principal Evaluation Program statute are technical. Extending the steering committee of stakeholders will make the evaluation better and more connected to what each student needs to be successful. This committee continually reflects on and refines the work that evaluation specialists implement across the state. In the past few years, specialists have focused on equity and systemic racism, but this work is far from done. The steering committee is continuing to work to help educators understand how student growth data can be a driver for their own professional goal setting.

This state went from a compliance process to an evaluation system where teachers examine their practice and work to improve themselves. The focused evaluation is an opportunity to dig into areas where the teacher or principal can improve their craft. In contrast to the comprehensive evaluation where a teacher is evaluated on every criterion, in the focused evaluation, a teacher looks at one criterion. The principal still observes the teacher and they have conferences and set learning goals. If a teacher is struggling, a principal has the option to move the teacher back to the comprehensive performance evaluation.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative McCaslin, prime sponsor; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Sue Anderson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.