

RCW 28A.415.265 Beginning educator support team program—

Mentors. (1) For the purposes of this section, a mentor educator is a teacher, educational staff associate, or principal who:

(a) Has successfully completed training in assisting, coaching, and advising beginning principals, beginning educational staff associates, beginning teachers, or student teachers as defined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction;

(b) Has been selected using mentor standards developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction; and

(c) Is participating in ongoing mentor skills professional development.

(2) (a) The beginning educator support team program is established to provide professional development and mentoring for beginning principals, beginning educational staff associates, beginning teachers, and candidates in alternative route teacher certification programs under chapter 28A.660 RCW.

(b) The superintendent of public instruction shall notify school districts about the beginning educator support team program and encourage districts to apply for program funds.

(3) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall allocate funds for the beginning educator support team program on a competitive basis to individual school districts, consortia of districts, or state-tribal compact schools. In allocating funds, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall give priority to:

(a) Schools and districts identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement as required under the federal elementary and secondary education act;

(b) School districts with a large influx of beginning principals, beginning educational staff associates, or beginning classroom teachers; and

(c) School districts that demonstrate an understanding of the research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

(4) A portion of the appropriated funds may be used for program coordination and provision of statewide or regional professional development through the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

(5) A beginning educator support team program must include the following components:

(a) A paid instructional orientation or individualized assistance before the start of the school year for program participants;

(b) A trained and qualified mentor assigned to each program participant for up to three years, with intensive support in the first year and decreasing support in subsequent years;

(c) A goal to provide program participants from underrepresented populations with a mentor who has strong ties to underrepresented populations;

(d) Ongoing professional development designed to meet the unique needs of each program participant for supplemental training and skill development;

(e) Initial and ongoing professional development for mentors;

(f) Release time for mentors and program participants to work together, as well as time for program participants to observe accomplished peers;

(g) To the extent possible, a school or classroom assignment that is appropriate for a beginning principal, beginning educational staff associate, or beginning teacher;

(h) Nonevaluative observations with written feedback for program participants;

(i) Support in understanding and participating in the state and district evaluation process and using the instructional framework, leadership framework, or both, to promote growth;

(j) Adherence to research-based standards for beginning educator induction developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction; and

(k) A program evaluation that identifies program strengths and gaps using the standards for beginning educator induction, the retention of beginning educators, and positive impact on student growth for program participants.

(6) The beginning educator support team program components under subsection (5) of this section may be provided for continuous improvement coaching to support educators on probation under RCW 28A.405.100. [2019 c 295 s 302; 2016 c 233 s 11; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 18 s 401.]

Findings—Intent—2019 c 295: "(1) The legislature finds that the most successful education systems have robust, well-prepared educators and educator leaders, with ample and relevant mentoring and professional learning opportunities appropriate to their roles and career aspirations. Further, the legislature finds that cultivating a public common school system that focuses on the growth of educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help students perform at high levels not only supports better professional practice, but results in greater professional satisfaction for educators.

(2) The legislature finds that excessively rigid policies have had the unintended consequence of preventing qualified and effective educators from remaining in the common schools. Barriers to educator retention, such as lack of induction and mentoring for beginning educators, a complicated and burdensome certification system, and frequent comprehensive performance evaluation requirements must be addressed. The legislature acknowledges that a substantial step towards reducing the barriers of complicated and burdensome certification requirements was taken in chapter 26, Laws of 2017 by creating a flexible option for renewing teacher and administrator certificates. However, continued legislative review and refinement of the link between certification programs, effective pedagogy, and professional satisfaction is necessary to strengthen educator retention efforts.

(3) Further efforts can also focus on the improvement of working conditions within schools and school districts. The legislature acknowledges that the demands on educators must be balanced with an encouragement of their excitement for the profession. The legislature intends to expand upon successful educator induction and mentoring programs such as the beginning educator support team program, and to streamline the teacher and principal evaluation program requirements for the highest performing educators." [2019 c 295 s 301.]

Effective date—Findings—Intent—2019 c 295: See notes following RCW 28A.310.235.

Findings—Intent—2019 c 295: See notes following RCW 28B.10.033.

Intent—2019 c 295: See note following RCW 28B.102.030.

Findings—Intent—2019 c 295: See note following RCW 28A.180.120.

**Application—Enforcement of laws protecting health and safety—
2013 2nd sp.s. c 18:** See note following RCW 28A.600.022.