

122A.70 TEACHER MENTORSHIP AND RETENTION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS.

Subdivision 1. **Teacher mentoring, induction, and retention programs.** (a) School districts are encouraged to develop teacher mentoring programs for teachers new to the profession or district, including teaching residents, teachers of color, teachers who are American Indian, teachers in license shortage areas, teachers with special needs, or experienced teachers in need of peer coaching.

(b) Teacher mentoring programs must be included in or aligned with districts' teacher evaluation and peer review processes under sections 122A.40, subdivision 8, and 122A.41, subdivision 5. A district may use staff development revenue under section 122A.61, special grant programs established by the legislature, or another funding source to pay a stipend to a mentor who may be a current or former teacher who has taught at least three years and is not on an improvement plan. Other initiatives using such funds or funds available under sections 124D.861 and 124D.862 may include:

(1) additional stipends as incentives to mentors of color or who are American Indian;

(2) financial supports for professional learning community affinity groups across schools within and between districts for teachers from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to come together throughout the school year. For purposes of this section, "affinity groups" are groups of educators who share a common racial or ethnic identity in society as persons of color or who are American Indian;

(3) programs for induction aligned with the district or school mentorship program during the first three years of teaching, especially for teachers from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups; or

(4) grants supporting licensed and nonlicensed educator participation in professional development, such as workshops and graduate courses, related to increasing student achievement for students of color and American Indian students in order to close opportunity and achievement gaps.

(c) A school or district that receives a grant must negotiate additional retention strategies or protection from unrequested leave of absences in the beginning years of employment for teachers of color and teachers who are American Indian. Retention strategies may include providing financial incentives for teachers of color and teachers who are American Indian to work in the school or district for at least five years and placing American Indian educators at sites with other American Indian educators and educators of color at sites with other educators of color to reduce isolation and increase opportunity for collegial support.

Subd. 2. **Applications.** The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board must make application forms available to sites interested in developing or expanding a mentorship program. A school district; a group of school districts; a coalition of districts, teachers, and teacher education institutions; or a coalition of schools, teachers, or nonlicensed educators may apply for a program grant. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board, in consultation with the teacher mentoring task force, must approve or disapprove the applications. To the extent possible, the approved applications must reflect effective mentoring, professional development, and retention components, and be geographically distributed throughout the state. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board must encourage the selected sites to consider the use of its assessment procedures.

Subd. 3. **Criteria for selection.** At a minimum, applicants must express commitment to:

(1) allow staff participation;

(2) assess skills of both beginning and mentor teachers;

(3) provide appropriate in-service to needs identified in the assessment;

- (4) provide leadership to the effort;
- (5) cooperate with higher education institutions;
- (6) provide facilities and other resources;
- (7) share findings, materials, and techniques with other school districts; and
- (8) retain teachers of color and teachers who are American Indian.

Subd. 4. **Additional funding.** Applicants are required to seek additional funding and assistance from sources such as school districts, postsecondary institutions, foundations, and the private sector.

Subd. 5. **Program implementation.** New and expanding mentorship sites that are funded to design, develop, implement, and evaluate their program must participate in activities that support program development and implementation. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board must provide resources and assistance to support new sites in their program efforts. These activities and services may include, but are not limited to: planning, planning guides, media, training, conferences, institutes, and regional and statewide networking meetings. Nonfunded schools or districts interested in getting started may participate. Fees may be charged for meals, materials, and the like.

Subd. 6. **Report.** By June 30 of each year after receiving a grant, recipients must submit a report to the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board on program efforts that describes mentoring and induction activities and assesses the impact of these programs on teacher effectiveness and retention.

History: 1987 c 398 art 8 s 13; 1990 c 562 art 7 s 8; 1991 c 265 art 8 s 7; 1993 c 224 art 7 s 21; 1994 c 647 art 8 s 19,20; 1998 c 397 art 8 s 77,101; 1Sp2017 c 5 art 12 s 22; 1Sp2019 c 11 art 3 s 16