
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

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| Bill No: | AB 2168 | Hearing Date: | June 13, 2018 |
| Author: | Thurmond | | |
| Version: | May 2, 2018 | | |
| Urgency: | No | Fiscal: | Yes |
| Consultant: | Ian Johnson | | |

Subject: Special education: teachers: grant program.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Special Education Teacher Grant program and appropriates two million dollars one-time to retain and mentor special education teachers.

BACKGROUND

Existing law establishes the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment System, to be administered jointly by the commission and the Superintendent. In administering the system, the commission and the Superintendent shall approve the most cost-effective programs of support and assessment. The commission and the Superintendent also shall ensure that programs meet the Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs adopted by the commission and that local programs support beginning teachers in meeting the competencies described in the California Standards for the Teaching Profession adopted by the commission. The system shall do all of the following:

- 1) Provide an effective transition into the teaching career for first-year and second-year teachers in California.
- 2) Improve the educational performance of pupils through improved training, information, and assistance for new teachers.
- 3) Enable beginning teachers to be effective in teaching pupils who are culturally, linguistically, and academically diverse.
- 4) Ensure the professional success and retention of new teachers.
- 5) Ensure that a support provider provides intensive individualized support and assistance to each participating beginning teacher.
- 6) Improve the rigor and consistency of individual teacher performance assessments and the usefulness of assessment results to teachers and decision makers.
- 7) Establish an effective, coherent system of performance assessments that are based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession adopted by the commission.

- 8) Examine alternative ways in which the general public and the educational profession may be assured that new teachers who remain in teaching have attained acceptable levels of professional competence.
- 9) Ensure that an individual induction plan is in place for each participating beginning teacher and is based on an ongoing assessment of the development of the beginning teacher.
- 10) Ensure continuous program improvement through ongoing research, development, and evaluation.

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes the Special Education Teacher Grant program and appropriates two million dollars one-time to retain and mentor special education teachers. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Appropriates \$2,000,000 in carryover funding from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to the Superintendent on a one-time basis, available for encumbrance until June 30, 2022, to establish a statewide framework and training and support network for the purpose of training and supporting qualified mentor teachers who will be supporting the new statewide influx of special education teachers in California.
- 2) Defines "eligible entity" as any of the following:
 - a) An institution of higher education.
 - b) A nonprofit public benefit corporation.
 - c) A county office of education or school district.
 - d) A partnership among multiple organizations of the types described.
- 3) Requires, of the funds appropriated, the department to allocate a one-time grant of \$500,000 to an eligible entity with demonstrated expertise in the area of retention of teachers at elementary and secondary schools.
- 4) Defines "local educational agency" (LEA) as a school district, a county office of education, a charter school, or a special education local plan area.
- 5) Requires, of the funds appropriated, the department to offer \$1,500,000 as grants to local educational agencies to create or expand local and regional infrastructure to support special education teacher mentoring for the purpose of supporting the retention of new special education teachers.
- 6) Authorizes a LEA to use funds awarded for activities that include, but are not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Training for existing teachers to become mentor teachers.

- b) Stipends for mentor teachers.
 - c) Piloting mentor teacher training systems.
- 7) Requires the department to award grants on a competitive basis using criteria it establishes.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “California has a severe special education teacher shortage. Due to a lack of qualified teachers to fill special education teaching positions, the number of emergency special education teaching permits has nearly doubled over the past 5 years. It is essential that the state establish a network and mechanism to train and support mentor teachers and administrators who will play a critical role in preparing teachers for long, productive, successful careers. As the current retention rate for special education teachers is less than three years, these new mentor teachers will be available to all teachers seeking additional support. This \$2 million allocation will be a compliment to existing and proposed programs to ensure ongoing assistance for mentors and administrators tasked with supporting special education educators.”
- 2) ***Learning Policy Institute (LPI) report.*** The LPI’s 2016 report, “Addressing California’s Emerging Teacher Shortage: An Analysis of Sources and Solutions” included the following summary: “After many years of teacher layoffs in California, school districts around the state are hiring again. With the influx of new K-12 funding, districts are looking to lower student-teacher ratios and reinstate classes and programs that were reduced or eliminated during the Great Recession. However, mounting evidence indicates that teacher supply has not kept pace with the increased demand.” The report included the following findings:
- a) Enrollment in educator preparation programs has dropped by more than 70 percent over the last decade.
 - b) In 2014-15, provisional and short-term permits nearly tripled from the number issued two years earlier, growing from about 850 to more than 2,400.
 - c) The number of teachers hired on substandard permits and credentials nearly doubled in the last two years, to more than 7,700 comprising a third of all the new credentials issued in 2014-15.
 - d) Estimated teacher hires for the 2015-16 school year increased by 25 percent from the previous year while enrollment in the University of California and the California State University teacher education programs increased by only about 3.8 percent.

The Learning Policy Institute (LPI) report offered several policy recommendations for consideration. These recommendations include the reinstatement of the

California Center on Teaching Careers and the establishment of incentives to attract diverse, talented individuals to teach in high-need locations and fields. This can be accomplished through programs that provide funding for candidates who prepare and teach in such schools and subject areas, e.g. the Assumption Program of Loans for Education. The report also recommends the creation of more innovative pipelines into teaching, such as high school career pathways or teacher preparation models that encourage and support young people and others to go into teaching in their own communities.

- 3) ***Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) assessment.*** As part of the Proposition 98 Education Analysis for the 2016-17 Governor's Budget released in February 2016, the LAO included a section on teacher workforce trends in which it examined evidence for teacher shortages in specific areas, identified and assessed past policy responses to these shortages, and raised issues for the Legislature to consider going forward in terms of new policy responses. In the report, the LAO indicated that the statewide teacher market will help alleviate existing shortages over time and that the shortages may decrease without direct state action. However, the LAO noted there are perennial staffing difficulties in specific areas, such as special education, math, and science, for which they encouraged the Legislature to address with narrowly tailored policies rather than with broad statewide policies. Specifically, they recommended the Legislature "consider outreach to re-engage former teachers or recruit out-of-state teachers. Both of these strategies are among the most cost-effective for increasing the supply of teachers within California in the short-term. If the state were to spend one-time funds on outreach, we encourage it to focus specifically on recruiting individuals who are trained to teach in perennial shortage areas. Outreach can attract viable teachers much faster and at a lower cost than many other shortage policies."
- 4) ***Programs funded in recent budgets.*** To help address the state's current teacher shortage, the Governor and Legislature funded the following proposals in the 2016 and 2017 budgets:
 - a) California Educator Development Program: \$11.3 million one-time federal Title II funds for a one-time competitive grant program that assists local educational agencies in attracting and supporting the preparation and continued learning of teachers, principals, and other school leaders in high-need subjects and schools.
 - b) Classified School Employees Credentialing Program: \$25 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund, available for five years, to support a second cohort of the California Classified School Employees Credentialing Program established in the 2016 Budget Act. The program provides grants to local educational agencies to support recruitment of non-certificated school employees to participate in a teacher preparation program and become certificated classroom teachers in California public schools
 - c) Classified School Employees Credentialing Program: \$20 million in one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for grants to local educational agencies

to provide opportunities for classified school employees to pursue a teaching credential.

- d) Integrated Teacher Preparation Grant Program: \$10 million in one-time non-Proposition 98 General Fund for grants to post-secondary institutions for the creation or expansion of four-year integrated teacher preparation programs. The funding is designed to increase the number of students who receive their bachelor's degree and teaching credential concurrently within a four-year program.
 - e) Cal-Teach: \$5 million in one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for the Commission on Teacher Credential to contract with a local educational agency (LEA) to recruit additional teachers into the profession, including new teachers, former teachers, and teachers from out of state. The recruitment efforts will particularly focus on recruiting individuals in shortage areas of math, science, special education, and bilingual education.
- 5) **Teacher mentoring.** According to Dara Barlin from the New Teacher Center, "Districts that once had revolving-door relationships with their new teachers have cut attrition rates in half. Entire cohorts of beginning teachers have begun to foster student gains similar to or greater than their veteran peers' results. And mentors are reigniting their own passion for teaching. When mentoring programs thrive, schools systems are also more likely to develop a comprehensive vision for assessing and supporting instructional excellence and to reconfigure their evaluation and tenure structures around that vision. More important, they have a much greater chance of transforming their schools into vibrant learning communities capable of helping all teachers, and all students, succeed."
- 6) **Technical amendment.** As currently drafted, the bill may be interpreted to require mentor teachers to seek additional credentialing or certification to participate in the program. If it is the desire of the Committee to pass this measure, **staff recommends** that the bill be amended to clarify that a teacher serving as a mentor is not required to get an additional credential or certificate through the California CTC and that no teacher shall be mandated to be trained as a mentor through this program or be barred from being a mentor. Further, **staff recommends** clarifying that any stipends provided to mentor teachers be consistent with any relevant local bargaining agreement.

SUPPORT

California State PTA
 Common Sense Kids Action
 Compton Unified School District
 Disability Rights California
 Educate. Advocate
 Empower Family California
 Presence Learning

OPPOSITION

None received

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