

HOUSE BILL NO. 445

INTRODUCED BY M. ROMANO, J. COHENOUR, T. RUNNING WOLF, D. HAWK, M. THANE, J. BERGSTROM, P. TUSS, L. SMITH, E. MATTHEWS

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A STATEWIDE TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM TO SUPPORT NEW TEACHERS, INCREASE TEACHER RETENTION, AND ENHANCE EDUCATION FOR MONTANA STUDENTS; PROVIDING PROGRAM PARAMETERS AND DUTIES FOR THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION; INCLUDING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; PROVIDING A DEFINITION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Statewide teacher mentoring program.** (1) There is a statewide teacher mentoring program administered by the commissioner of higher education. The purpose of the program is to support new teachers, increase teacher retention, and enhance education for Montana students through a mentoring program for new and early career teachers through targeted, individual mentoring. Participation in the program is at the discretion of the board of trustees of a school district employing a new or early career teacher.

(2) The program must involve:

(a) connecting new and early career teachers with experienced mentor teachers in the same content area or grade level for a 1-year structured mentoring program;

(b) robust and systematic training for mentor teachers to ensure a high-quality and effective program;

(c) a platform capable of supporting mentoring communication, activities, and reporting through remote means;

(d) ongoing monitoring and support for matched teachers;

(e) the opportunity for in-person interaction through regional gatherings, site visits, and other professional development activities;

1 (f) an emphasis on serving new and early career teachers in impacted schools as defined in 20-4-
2 502;

3 (g) surveys and other data collection considered necessary by the commissioner of higher
4 education to demonstrate program impact; and

5 (h) collaboration between the office of the commissioner of higher education, the office of public
6 instruction, school districts, professional educator preparation programs, and organizations serving teachers
7 and administrators.

8 (3) Contingent on appropriation by the legislature, the commissioner shall create and administer a
9 program meeting the requirements of subsection (2).

10 (4) The legislature intends that funding provided for this program be utilized for:

11 (a) \$2,500 stipends for mentor teachers;

12 (b) \$600 stipends for mentee teachers that include a minimum \$300 matched portion from the
13 school district employing the mentee teacher;

14 (c) administrative costs, not to exceed 25% of the state funding provided.

15 (5) In accordance with 5-11-210, the commissioner shall report annually to the education interim
16 committee on the status and impacts of the program.

17 (6) For the purposes of this section, "new or early career teacher" means a teacher in the first 3
18 years of the teacher's teaching career.

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20 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation.** (1) There is appropriated \$1 million from the state
21 general fund to the office of the commissioner of higher education for each year of the biennium beginning July
22 1, 2023, for the purposes of [section 1].

23 (2) The legislature intends that the appropriation in this section be considered a part of the ongoing
24 base for the next legislative session.

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26 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
27 integral part of Title 20, chapter 4, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 4, apply to [section 1].

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1 NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2023.

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