



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #610

Grants for Mentors (DPI -- Categorical Aids)

[LFB 2005-07 Budget Summary: Page 404, #11]

CURRENT LAW

Under the current peer review and mentoring grant program, cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs) or consortia consisting of two or more school districts or CESAs, or a combination thereof, may apply to DPI for a grant. The grant can be used to provide technical assistance and training for teachers, who are licensed by or have been issued a professional teaching permit by the State Superintendent, to implement peer review and mentoring programs. Grantees are required to provide matching funds, which may be in the form of money or in-kind services or both, equivalent to at least 20% of the amount of the grant awarded. The Department cannot award more than \$25,000 to an applicant in a fiscal year.

In 2004-05, \$500,000 GPR is provided for this program.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$1,312,500 GPR annually and create an appropriation for a new mentoring categorical aid grant program. Require DPI to award a grant to each person employing an initial educator in a position requiring a DPI teaching license, per initial educator. Specify that each grant would equal the amount that the employer is spending to provide a mentor for the initial educator, but could not exceed \$375, per initial educator. Require DPI to prorate payments if appropriated funds were insufficient.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Under administrative rule Chapter PI 34, three stages of licensure are established: initial, professional, and master educator. An initial educator license is a five-year, non-renewable license. A school district employing an initial educator must provide ongoing orientation, seminars, and a qualified mentor. Mentors must be educators who have been trained to provide support and assistance to initial educators, and to provide input into evaluations of initial educators.

2. The current law peer review and mentoring grant program provides competitive grants, funded from the state appropriation, for professional development and mentoring. Funding is contingent upon the following requirements: (a) activities support initial educators and mentors; (b) activities support the Wisconsin educator standards; (c) the grant recipient's budget for the program reflects at least 20% matching funds in the form of money or in kind; and (d) matching costs are auditable and kept on file.

3. In 2003-04, the peer review and mentoring program awarded 27 new grants and eight continuation grants to consortia, totaling \$500,000. The 27 recipients of new grants in 2003-04 were the only projects to receive funding in 2004-05. In the past, DPI has awarded additional peer review and mentoring grants using supplemental federal funds for professional development under Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In 2003-04, an additional 26 peer review and mentoring grants totaling \$270,000 were awarded using federal funding. The Department indicates that this source of funds is no longer available to be used for this purpose.

4. The proposed mentoring categorical aid would be non-competitive and available to any school district employing an initial educator. Funding would reimburse a school districts for the costs of mentoring, such as providing substitute teachers when mentors observe initial educators in the classrooms.

5. DPI estimates that approximately 3,500 initial educators will be hired annually. Using DPI's estimate, the Governor's proposed funding level of \$1,312,500 would provide school districts \$375 for each initial educator annually, which could be used for mentoring costs associated with that initial educator. Data is not available for the actual costs to districts for providing mentors.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$1,312,500 annually and create an appropriation for a new mentoring categorical aid program.

2. Delete the provision.

Alternative 2	GPR
2005-07 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$2,625,000

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