



AN ACT CREATING THE MONTANA B.E.S.T. TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM; CREATING A STATEWIDE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE TARGETED TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO EARLY CAREER TEACHERS IN THE FIRST 3 YEARS OF THEIR TEACHING CAREERS, INCREASE TEACHER RETENTION, AND ENHANCE EDUCATION FOR MONTANA STUDENTS; PROVIDING PROGRAM PARAMETERS AND DUTIES FOR THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION; ESTABLISHING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; PROVIDING A DEFINITION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE.

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

Section 1. Montana B.E.S.T. teacher training program. (1) There is a statewide Montana bolstering educators' support and training teacher training program administered by the office of public instruction. The program may be known as the Montana B.E.S.T. program.

(2) The purpose of the program is to support teachers who are new to the teaching profession, increase teacher retention, and enhance education for Montana students through a training program for early career teachers by providing them with targeted, individual support. Participation in the program is at the discretion of the board of trustees of a school district employing an early career teacher.

(3) The program must:

- (a) connect early career teachers with experienced mentor teachers in the same content area or grade level for a 1-year structured training program;
- (b) include clear criteria for the selection of teacher mentors based on measures of teacher effectiveness;
- (c) be based on best practices for new teacher support;
- (d) include robust and systematic training for mentor teachers to ensure a high-quality and

effective program;

- (e) provide a platform capable of supporting activities and communication between and among mentor teachers and early career teachers and capable of reporting through remote means;
- (f) provide ongoing training and support for the paired early career and mentor teachers;
- (g) provide the opportunity for in-person interaction through regional gatherings, site visits, and other professional development activities;
- (h) emphasize support for early career teachers in impacted schools as defined in 20-4-502;
- (i) include surveys and other data collection considered necessary by the commissioner of higher education to demonstrate program impact; and
- (j) involve collaboration between the office of the commissioner of higher education, the office of public instruction, school districts, professional educator preparation programs, and organizations serving teachers and administrators.

(4) Contingent on funding appropriated by the legislature, the office of public instruction shall create and administer a program meeting the requirements of this section.

(5) The legislature intends that funding provided for this program be used for:

- (a) \$2,500 stipends for mentor teachers;
 - (b) \$600 stipends for early career teachers that include a minimum amount of \$300 from the school district employing the early career teachers; and
 - (c) administrative costs not to exceed 15% of the state funding provided.
- (6) In accordance with 5-11-210, the office of public instruction shall report annually to the education interim committee on the status and impacts of the program.

(7) For the purposes of this section, "early career teacher" means a teacher who is new to the field of teaching or in the first 3 years of the teacher's teaching career.

Section 2. Appropriation. (1) There is appropriated \$1 million from the state general fund to the office of public instruction for each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, for the purposes described in [section 1].

(2) The legislature intends that this is a one-time-only appropriation.

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

Section 4. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

Section 5. Termination. [This act] terminates June 30, 2031.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 340, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

HOUSE BILL NO. 340

INTRODUCED BY M. ROMANO, J. REAVIS, B. EDWARDS, J. ISALY, M. LEE, P. STRAND, T. CROWE, P.

ELVERUM, S. FYANT, J. WEBER, J. SOOKTIS, A. GRIFFITH, D. POWERS, M. CUNNINGHAM, S.

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COHENOUR, T. FRANCE, S. HOWELL, J. KARLEN, C. KEOGH, E. STAFMAN, K. SULLIVAN, M. THANE, P.

TUSS, S. DEMAROIS, D. JOY, C. FITZPATRICK, J. LYNCH

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