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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 178
AS AMENDED BY
HOUSE AMENDMENT NO. 1

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO YEAR-LONG TEACHER RESIDENCY PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, teacher residencies have been successful in Delaware since 2013 through partnership of school districts and charter schools with educator preparation programs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education administers a program to support these partnerships, awarding funding appropriated in the state budget through a competitive process; and

WHEREAS, teacher residencies provide teaching experience to pre-service teachers who work in a classroom with an expert teacher while engaging in coursework at a college or university; and

WHEREAS, year-long teacher residencies are seen as the “gold-standard” for teacher preparation because of the in-depth, immersive experience they provide candidates; and

WHEREAS, research shows residencies can improve teacher recruitment, retention, and diversity of the teaching profession nationally and in Delaware because they provide stronger preparation, support, mentoring, and financial stipends; and

WHEREAS, teacher residencies provide a consistent pipeline of better-prepared new teachers, reduce turnover, fill chronic shortage areas, and prepare teachers who are more likely to teach in high-need schools.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Subchapter VIII, Chapter 12 of Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 1281. Year-Long Residency Programs

(a) There is established a year-long residency program, the purpose of which is to increase retention and diversity of quality educators in Delaware public schools.

(b) For purposes of this section:

(1) “Resident” means a student enrolled in an education preparation program who is selected for participation in a year-long residency program authorized under this section.

(2) “Year-long residency program” means a partnership between a district or charter school and an educator preparation program to provide residents a year-long, practice-based learning experience working directly with students, in a manner that mirrors the experience of teachers in that school.

(c)(1) Subject to appropriations, the Department shall develop a competitive grant process to support districts and charters in developing and supporting year-long residency programs.

(2) Annual appropriations for the year-long residency programs do not revert to the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year, but shall remain available to the Department for disbursement pursuant to this section.

(3) The Department shall award successful applicants funding on at least a 15-month basis, July 1 through September 30 of the following year.

(4) Awards for the upcoming fiscal year or multiple fiscal years shall be declared by the January prior.

(5) Funds awarded under this section to provide a stipend for residents may be used by a resident for any purpose.

(6) Applicants for the award may apply for a program of support for residents—including stipends for residents, benefits, substitutes, cooperating teacher stipends, and professional development.

(d) Applications for funding under this section must include a description of all of the following:

(1) A shared vision and partnership between the applicant and an educator preparation program to provide a high-quality experience for residents.

(2) A process for recruiting residents with demonstrated cultural competency and residents from diverse backgrounds.

(3) A selection process for cooperating teachers who will coach residents, including a job description and a support system for mentors.

(4) A plan to collect and provide all data required by the Department to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

(5) A plan beyond the grant award to sustain the partnership.

(e) In evaluating applications, the Department shall give additional weight to applicants that commit to any of the following:

(1) Selecting residents who are pursuing credentials in a critical needs area.

(2) Placing residents in a school that serves a student population with a significant number of low-income or English learner students.

(f) The Department shall convene, in an open forum, stakeholders representing school districts, charter schools, teacher preparation programs, teachers, and non-profit organizations to provide input on methods to increase retention and diversity of quality educators in Delaware public schools and the development of a fair, robust rubric for evaluation of residency grant applications. The Department of Education shall finalize the rubric and implement it as part of the application process.

(g) Residents must commit to work in a qualifying Delaware school for at least 3 years after receiving their teaching credentials.

(h) The Department shall adopt rules and regulations to implement this section.