

# MEMORANDUM



## JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE

TO Members of the Joint Budget Committee  
FROM Amanda Bickel, JBC Staff (303-866-4960)  
DATE March 20, 2024  
SUBJECT Department of Education – Bill clarifications/outstanding items

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### *EDUCATOR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM – DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUEST R13*

During figure setting for the Department of Education, the Committee did not have consensus to run a bill for the Educator Mentorship program. Therefore no bill was sent to draft, and the dollar is not included in JBC action so far. There was an open question about whether the JBC might do a placeholder for this program. Related costs are not currently in the JBC's list of appropriations/other actions, so adding related costs would have a negative impact on the JBC's balancing position. The original staff write-up is attached. **The request was for \$3,132,271 General Fund.**

### *ASCENT PROGRAM COST-CONTAINMENT – FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS IN BILL*

The Committee sent a bill on the ASCENT program to drafting. The components include: capping the number of slots at the FY 2024-25 number; capping the amount per slot at the FY 2023-24 number; and ensuring that some additional data is collected to better understand how school districts are using the differential between the revenue provided by the State and what schools pay community colleges and other higher education institutions.

Based on further work with the Department and LCS Staff, **this bill will include an appropriation clause that reduces funding for extended high school by \$1,081,762 cash funds from the State Education Fund for FY 2024-25.** This is based on the differential between the **FY 2023-24 rate for ASCENT slots (after the BSF) of \$9,588 and the FY 2024-25 rate of \$10,244 and 1,666 ASCENT slots** projected to be used in FY 2024-25. Please note that the staff figure setting document incorrectly cited the FY 2022-23 ASCENT slot rate in lieu of the FY 2023-24 slot rate.

In addition, the Department has indicated that the study component in the bill will require a **one-time appropriation of \$45,600 General Fund for FY 2024-25**, since the Department currently has no resources for this function. Staff believes this is a reasonable estimate.

**With the JBC's permission, these amounts will be included in a bill draft that will be brought to you tomorrow.**

Excerpt from Staff Figure Setting

→ R13 EDUCATOR TALENT MENTORSHIP GRANT PROGRAM [LEGISLATION REQUIRED]

*REQUEST:* The Department requests \$3,132,271 General Fund and 1.2 FTE in FY 2024-25 and ongoing to sustain support for the Teacher Mentorship Grant Program. The Teacher Mentorship Grant Program is currently funded with Federal American Rescue Plan (ARPA)/Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) dollars, which is set to expire September 30, 2024.

The Mentor Teacher Grant Program would provide \$3 million in annual funding to school districts, BOCES or charter schools for induction and mentoring support for teachers in their first three years.

The additional \$132,271 will support continued technical assistance from the CDE staff person (1.0 FTE) currently managing the grant program, plus additional grants management support (.2 FTE) that is currently being funded out of the ESSER state set-aside.

*RECOMMENDATION:* **Staff recommends the request and recommends that the Committee sponsor legislation to authorize this program as a state-authorized function of the Department of Education.** Although the Department has been operating the program using federal ESSER funds, it does not have statutory authority to receive and expend state funds for this purpose. While staff is supportive of the program, **staff notes that funding could be authorized at a lower level, if necessary to help balance the budget.** Staff also recommends that any FTE funding included in a JBC-sponsored bill be calculated consistent with JBC common policy. Any funding will need to be included in legislation, so the staff recommendation includes no funding in the Long Bill.

*EVIDENCE:* The Department has indicated that the evidence continuum is not applicable to this program as a full evaluation cycle has not taken place. However, qualitative responses have been strong, and JBC staff anticipated that program could be classified as “theory informed” based broader national evidence. The Department did not point to particular studies, but a quick staff search on the topic indicated that there has been substantial research on the impact of mentorship in teacher induction programs generally. One article summarized a number of empirical studies as follows.

This review critically examines 15 empirical studies, conducted since the mid-1980s, on the effects of support, guidance, and orientation programs—collectively known as induction—for beginning teachers. Most of the studies reviewed provide empirical support for the claim that support and assistance for beginning teachers have a positive impact on three sets of outcomes: teacher commitment and retention, teacher classroom instructional practices, and student achievement. Of the studies on commitment and retention, most showed that beginning teachers who participated in induction showed positive impacts. For classroom instructional practices, the majority of studies reviewed showed that beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction performed better at various aspects of teaching, such as keeping students on task, using effective student questioning practices, adjusting classroom activities to meet students’ interests, maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere, and demonstrating successful classroom management. For student achievement, almost all of the studies showed that students of beginning teachers who participated in induction had higher scores, or gains, on academic achievement tests. There were,

however, exceptions to this overall pattern—in particular a large randomized controlled trial of induction in a sample of large, urban, low-income schools—which found some significant positive effects on student achievement but no effects on either teacher retention or teachers’ classroom practices....<sup>1</sup>

This suggests that these programs can usually demonstrate positive effects on factors such as retention, but the ability to do so may depend on program specifics. Thus, tracking the impact of this program at the state level, if authorized and funded, will be particularly important.

*ANALYSIS:*

- The request notes that support for new-to-the-profession teachers is a critical aspect in the successful retention of educators in our Colorado schools. With the current teacher shortage across the state, providing a high-quality mentorship program is essential for early career teachers. Additionally, induction and mentoring is required for any new-to-the-profession teacher to obtain a professional teacher license.
- The Department initiated a larger version of this program with \$12.9 million of federal ESSER funds, funding two cohorts in FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24. The table below compares the original program (years 1 and 2) and the new proposal for a state-funded program.

TEACHER MENTORSHIP GRANT PROGRAM (R13)		
	“ORIGINAL” PROGRAM	REQUESTED ONGOING
<b>Fund Source</b>	Federal Funds (ESSER III)	General Fund
<b>Amount</b>	\$12,921,652	\$3,132,271
<b>FTE</b>	1.0 FTE + ESSER Grants Admin FTE	1.2 FTE
<b>Time Frame</b>	Cohort 1: 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years (\$9.5M; 26 programs @ \$364,000 per 2-yr grant) Cohort 2: 2023-24 school year (\$3.2M; 33 programs @ \$94,454 per grant for 1 yr	Annual Grant Cycle, Ongoing Appropriation
<b>Authorization</b>	Other (State Board Approved Action)	

- The primary rationale for launching the program is to address teacher retention issues. Induction and mentoring is required by state statute for new teachers, but there is currently no related state funding available through the Department of Education. An existing program funded in the Department of Higher Education is focused on institutions and provides training and compensation for mentors, while the proposed CDE program will focus on local-level initiatives to support teacher mentorship and induction programs. This includes training and compensation for mentors but also other interventions.

<sup>1</sup> Ingersoll and Strong, The Impact of Induction and Mentoring Programs for Beginning Teachers: A Critical Review of the Research, *Review of Educational Research*, Volume 18, Issue 2, June 1, 2011. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0034654311403323>

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- In the existing program, ESSER funds have been used for mentor and inductee stipends, teacher release time, mentor training, technology such as video observation, and other supports for teachers in years 1-3 and their mentor teachers.
- Initial results indicate that of teachers who participated, 97 percent plan to stay in education, which is a notable improvement over national educator retention rates of 82.7 percent for teachers in year 1-5.<sup>2</sup> The Department notes that in FY 2022-23, more than 19.0 percent of educators turned over and moved either to a new classroom or out of the profession; prior to this, turnover was 14-16 percent. Educator retention is a significant and growing concern.
- The Department has explained that grants would be distributed on an annual basis through an open competitive grant process. New school districts, charter schools, or BOCES would be awarded grants each year to build, enhance, and strengthen mentoring programs. Department staff have indicated that grants would range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and would support 50-60 districts per year. The program thus far has been flexible in terms of the types of supports provided, but will continue to monitor its effectiveness. The Department's Educator Talent team indicates that getting support for mentorship and teacher induction is something they have sought for multiple years.

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<sup>2</sup> "Public School Teacher Attrition and Mobility in the First Five Years", National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, April 2015. See also some data specific to Colorado: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/pdf/REL\\_2019001.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/pdf/REL_2019001.pdf)