

State of Washington
Joint Legislative Audit and Review
Committee

Evaluation of Teacher Internship Credits

Report 98-1

January 9, 1998

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EVALUATION OF TEACHER INTERNSHIP CREDITS

Summary

With the 1995 enactment of ESHB 1518, Teacher Internship Credits, the legislature added participation in internships with business, industry, or government by teachers as a means of advancement on the statewide salary allocation schedule. Our mandated study found that the following conditions exist regarding implementation of this act.

- State Board of Education (SBE) staff indicated that only seven school districts reported participation in internships by their teachers.
- A survey by the Washington Education Association (WEA) found that schoolteachers are generally unaware of the opportunity to participate in these internships but appear to be very interested in them.
- There is no research which evaluates the comparative efficacy of academic, inservice and internship professional development activities in improving teacher effectiveness.
- SBE, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and school districts should work together more to ensure that legislative policy changes regarding professional development, continuing education, or certification issues are adequately disseminated to all parties of interest.

Overview

AGENCY RESPONSE

We have shared the report with OFM, SBE, OSPI, and the WEA and provided them an opportunity to submit written comments. SBE, OPSI, and OFM submitted written comments and those documents are attached as Appendix 2.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the substantial assistance to the development of this report provided by the staff of the State Board of Education and the Washington Education Association. Additionally, the staff of the Office of Financial Management and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction provided important technical assistance.

This study was conducted by Gerry McLaughlin of the JLARC staff and supervised by Ron Perry.

Cheryle A. Broom
Legislative Auditor

On January 9, 1998, this report was approved by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee and its distribution authorized.

Representative Cathy McMorris
Chair

EVALUATION OF TEACHER INTERNSHIP CREDITS

Final Report

This study is a limited review of the implementation of ESHB 1518, Teacher Internship Credits (1995 legislation). That enactment provided for awarding the equivalent of college quarter credits for advancement on the statewide salary allocation schedule to certificated personnel for participation in internships with business, industry, or government. Ostensibly, this act was designed to encourage teachers to become more familiar with business, industry, and government and then bring that perspective back into the classroom.

This legislation included a study mandate for the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)¹ to evaluate internships reported by teachers for advancement on the state salary allocation schedule. We were also asked to evaluate the relative efficacy of the various types of professional development activities, including inservice training, academic courses, and internships in improving teacher effectiveness and productivity.

Our initial investigations regarding this study mandate suggest that there has not been sufficient time for teachers to make use of the provisions of ESHB 1518. We discussed this concern with the primary sponsor of the legislation, and a bill was introduced in the 1997 session to move the study deadline to 1999. This legislation failed to pass. We then proceeded with a study having limited scope and narrowly defined objectives.

¹The study mandate was actually directed to “The Legislative Office on Performance Audit and Fiscal Analysis”, which the legislature considered creating out of a merger of the Legislative Budget Committee (LBC—which was subsequently renamed JLARC), and Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP). This legislation was not enacted.

Introduction

SBE and WEA assisted JLARC

Study Approach

Consistent with the study's scope and objectives, we asked the SBE and the WEA for assistance in gathering information on the implementation of the provisions of ESHB 1518.

Administrative rules adopted by the SBE require school districts to report annually on participation in internships by their certificated staff. We used this reporting process to assess the degree that the districts were approving internship credits for recognition on the state salary allocation schedule. The WEA offered to survey individual teachers on their awareness and participation in these internships. We have briefly summarized the results of that survey in this report. Finally, we updated a 1994 limited literature review by JLARC on the relative effectiveness of varying types of professional development/continuing education programs.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Background

Overview of Teacher Compensation System

Teachers in Washington State are primarily compensated on the basis of how much experience they have in teaching and how much education they have received. Those teachers with more years of experience or more educational credits or degrees usually earn more than their counterparts with less experience or less education. In this regard, Washington State uses a matrix which we refer to as the state allocation schedule to distribute dollars to school districts for teacher salaries.²

Credit Eligibility for Purposes of Salary Advancement

Prior to the enactment of ESHB 1518, two categories of educational credits were used for determining placement on the state allocation schedule: academic credits and inservice credits. Academic credits are those earned at accredited institutions which apply toward a degree program. Inservice credits are those earned by taking

² This schedule was developed by the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) in 1979 and is updated each biennium.

professional development clock hours from a provider approved by the SBE for purposes of salary advancement. ESHB 1518 created a new category of professional development eligible for recognition on the statewide salary allocation schedule: internships.³ One inservice credit is equivalent to one academic credit; however, it takes forty clock-hours to earn an internship credit rather than the ten clock-hours needed to earn inservice credits.

Teacher internships count for salary advancement

School District Education Credit Reports to SPI

As noted above, inservice, academic, and internship credits are reported by school districts to OSPI through a mechanism called the “S-275 report” within the educational community. This process is used to report the academic degrees and update the educational credits for each teacher. However, it does not list the number of inservice credits by the type of training being reported, i.e., clock-hours or internships. This data provides OSPI with the information used in the calculation of the “staff mix factor” and the computation of salary allocations for each school district.

Status of Teacher Internship Participation Reported by School Districts

State Board Role

By law, the SBE is the agency responsible for establishing rules for awarding clock-hours for participation of certificated personnel in internships⁴ as well as establishing standards for all inservice training programs. The local school districts are the approving authority for granting individual credit to teachers.

Additionally, the SBE requires school districts to report annually, by December 1, all internship reports submitted by certificated staff and approved by the district. We used these reports to assess the level of school district participation in the teacher internship program.

³ Teachers also have a continuing education requirement of completing 150 clock-hours of study every five years to maintain their teaching certificate. For the most part, the clock-hours of academic, inservice, and internship training used for placement on the state allocation schedule are also used for meeting continuing education requirements.

⁴ RCW 28A.415.025

Districts Internship Submissions /SBE Requirements

The SBE has adopted in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) the following requirements for internship:

- A written plan must be developed and approved jointly by intern, school district, and employer.
- The plan must provide the intern with an opportunity to learn practices in government, business, and industry that are applicable to the curriculum they teach and directly related to current educational assignment.
- Upon completion of the internship, an intern must submit a report to the school district, which includes an evaluation by the intern and participating government, business, or industry. The report must state whether the internship will be claimed for purposes of recognition on the state salary schedule for compensation purposes.⁵

Results of Reports

In their report to us, the SBE states that 204 out of a total of 296 school districts submitted the required annual reports for the 1996-97 school year.⁶ Of these, only seven districts submitted reports indicating that they had teachers participating in internships.⁷

School districts unaware of internship legislation and rules

Reasons for Low Participation

Based on the reports to the SBE, it would appear that participation in internship activities was low because so few knew about the enabling legislation. For example, a response from the Spokane School District stated that “they were unaware of Chapter 180-83 WAC,” the state rules implementing the law. The impact of the apparent lack of awareness at the school district level on schoolteachers is discussed below.

⁵ WAC 180-83-010 through 070.

⁶ SBE moved their internship report due date for 1997 from December 1 to November 1 in order to provide us the report information in time to incorporate it in this study.

⁷ Bellevue, Edmonds, Moses Lake, North Kitsap, Puyallup, Tacoma, and Wapato.

Teacher Awareness of, and Participation in, Internships

In order to assess schoolteacher awareness and interest in the teacher internship opportunities, we enlisted the aid of the WEA to survey individual teachers, via their 290 local chapter presidents, on their awareness and utilization of the internships created under the provisions of ESHB 1518.⁸

Survey Results

The association received 652 responses to their survey. Nearly 90 percent (or 577) of the teachers responding were not aware of the teacher internship program. Only five teachers noted that they had taken advantage of the internship opportunities. WEA staff indicated that it was not clear from the survey responses whether these five individuals were specifically referring to participation in internships authorized under ESHB 1518.

WEA Follow-up with Teachers

In response to an additional question, a substantial majority of the survey respondents expressed a positive interest in pursuing internship opportunities. This level of interest appeared to be strongest among newer teachers. Subsequent to the survey, the WEA sent out over 300 informational packets to members who had requested information explaining the internship program.

Comparison of Efficacy of Professional Development Activities

The state teacher compensation process, which rewards teachers on the basis of educational attainment, is based on a philosophy that post baccalaureate training makes teachers more effective. Since the study mandate focused on the relative efficacy of various types of professional development training, i.e., academic, inservice, and internships, we updated a 1994 literature review on this subject, which was part of a previous JLARC report.⁹

⁸ Since the survey was conducted through the local WEA presidents, there was no specific universe or total survey population targeted. There are approximately 60,000 teachers in this state.

⁹ K-12 Inservice Education Study, Report 95-1, Legislative Budget Committee.

Low teacher awareness and participation

**Research
on the
linkage
between
teacher
training and
student
performance
is
inconclusive**

Results of 1994 Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to determine whether any research has established a link between additional teacher education and improved teacher performance.

The overall findings contained in JLARC's report are summarized as follows:

We found no studies on the relationship between a teacher's general educational level and the performance of the teacher or the students in their classroom. The empirical research available on the relationship between teachers with advanced degrees (primarily master's degrees) and performance is contradictory. A number of studies on the value of specific training programs show that some have been found to be "effective." However, these studies did not measure whether skills were maintained over time, and the research used subjective measures of performance.¹⁰

Current Literature Review

Our update of the literature review focused on two documents which were recommended to us by educational authorities: "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future"¹¹ and "Does Teacher Education make a Difference."¹²

Neither of these documents, either because of their focus or because of other methodological problems, provided us with new information that changes our conclusions from the 1994 JLARC report regarding linkage between teacher professional development activities and student performance.

Insufficient Information to Make a Comparison of Types Professional Development Activities

As noted in the introduction, we were specifically asked in the study mandate to make a comparison of the efficacy of internship,

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 3.

¹¹ "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future", Report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. September, 1996.

¹² "Does Teacher Education Make a Difference" A literature Review and Planning Study, Prepared for the Institute on Student Assessment and Evaluation, Florida Department of Education.

inservice, and academic credits in improving teacher effectiveness. Since very few teachers and school districts have taken advantage of the provisions of ESHB 1518, we do not have an instate comparison of outcomes to evaluate at this time.

Additionally, we contacted staff of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) who told us that, to their knowledge, no other state has enacted a statewide “internship” component as part of its professional development programs for teachers. Therefore, comparisons of outcomes for these types of professional development activities in other states is also not possible.

DISCUSSION

Information on the enactment and intent of ESHB 1518 and the adoption of implementing rules by SBE did not reach the vast majority of public school teachers. Therefore, we have very little operational and no outcome data for evaluating the impact of this legislative policy change regarding professional development activities for teachers.

Furthermore, it is not clear who is responsible for disseminating information to individual teachers on available state professional development programs or certification issues. Arguably the SBE’s responsibility is fulfilled upon publication of the rules. The school districts would appear to have some responsibility in this regard, since the teachers are their employees. As stated above, the WEA has taken steps to inform its members of the internship opportunities and the provisions of ESHB 1518.

In the JLARC performance audit of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Report 96-1, we noted that teachers were not adequately informed of certification and continuing education requirements. Recommendation 9 in that report, suggested that the SBE should evaluate the costs and benefits of providing certificate holders notification of changes in requirements and procedures affecting their certification. Because the awarding of credit for participation in internships can also meet the teachers’ continuing education requirements for certification purposes, we believe it falls within the scope and intent of Recommendation 9 by the committee. Since the time that recommendation was approved in 1996, OSPI, SBE, and WEA have significantly enhanced their

Lack of awareness of internships precluded evaluation of impact

**Information
on
internships
to be
posted on
agency web
sites**

internet web sites; which are major sources of information on professional development, certification, and continuing education requirements.

None of the three web sites contain information on the internship opportunities created by ESHB 1518. We believe that the intent of Recommendation 9 could be met by posting information about the enactment of ESHB 1518 and SBE implementing rules to the various agency web pages. We encourage OSPI and SBE to use this approach to disseminate information of this type in the future. Both SBE and OSPI staff have agreed to implement this suggestion.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Appendix 1

SCOPE

This study is a limited review of the implementation of ESHB 1518, Teacher Internship Credits (1995 Legislation) which provided for awarding the equivalent of college quarter credits for advancement on the statewide salary allocation schedule, to certificated personnel for participation in internships with business, industry, or government.

OBJECTIVES

1. Determine whether any internships have been reported by certificated personnel for advancement on the statewide salary allocation schedule. Provide descriptive and comparative detail on the internships that have been reported, if available.
2. Determine whether the 1995 legislative policy change has provided an incentive for certificated personnel to participate in internships. If not, identify any barriers or disincentives to participation.
3. Update JLARC's 1994 literature review regarding the efficacy of various types of training, including internships, in improving the teaching performance of certificated personnel.

AGENCY RESPONSE

Appendix 2

- **WA State Board of Education**
- **Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction**
- **Office of Financial Management**



WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
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Providing leadership, support, and advocacy so that each student achieves success in school and life

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JLARC

December 30, 1997

Cheryle A. Broom
Legislative Auditor
Joint Legislative Audit and
Review Committee
506 16th Avenue SE
Olympia, WA 98504-2323

RE: Proposed Final Report re. Teacher Internship Credits

Dear Ms. Broom:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed final report regarding Teacher Internship Credits (as mandated by ESHB 1518), which will be presented to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee on January 9, 1998.

The State Board of Education concurs with the findings, conclusions and suggestions in the report. As part of its initiative to implement a comprehensive communications plan, greater use of the Board's web site as a communication tool will be pursued as a priority activity/service.

Sincerely,

Larry Davis, Executive Director
State Board of Education

LD:dm



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DR. TERRY BERGESON

OLD CAPITOL BUILDING • PO BOX 47200 • OLYMPIA WA 98504-7200

January 16, 1998

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JAN 29 1998

JLARC

Cheryle A. Broom
Legislative Auditor
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee
5066 16th Avenue SE
Olympia, WA 98504-2323

RE: Teacher Internship Credits Proposed Final Report

Dear Ms. Broom:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed final report of the Teacher Internship Credits of January 9, 1998.

I concur with the findings, and suggestions in the report and will disseminate the information on professional development, internships, and continuing education requirements on our new web page.

Thank you for your acknowledgment of the technical assistance my staff provided in the development of the document. We also appreciate the professional and collaborative efforts exhibited by your staff during the development of this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terry Bergeson".

Dr. Terry Bergeson
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Insurance Building, PO Box 43113 • Olympia, Washington 98504-3113 • (360) 902-0555

January 6, 1998

Cheryle Broom, Legislative Auditor
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee
P. O. Box 40910
Olympia, WA 98501-0910

Dear Ms. Broom,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) *Evaluation of Teacher Internship Credits: Preliminary and Proposed Final Report*.

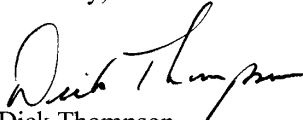
As the report makes clear, the evaluation was restricted by a lack of data because only a handful of teachers have participated in the internship program. This suggests that the program may have been evaluated too soon after its creation. While studies of new and existing programs such as this are critical to effective government, I agree with JLARC's original proposal to postpone the study until 1999 when more data will be available.

The small number of internships may also be related to a lack of program awareness from teachers and districts. I concur with the report's suggestion to include details of the internship program on the web pages of the State Board of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

I understand that JLARC was unable to evaluate the internship program as a specific professional development strategy because no other state has created such a program. However, recent research in education and other industries clearly support the efficacy of professional development, establishing a solid link between teacher education and student achievement. Thus, the internship program may serve as an important skill development tool for teachers, but it is clearly too soon to determine at this time.

Education remains the top priority of the Governor and I appreciate JLARC's continued efforts in fairly and objectively evaluating educational programs.

Sincerely,


Dick Thompson
Director

DT:CB:lh

